AMERICAN COLD WAR PROPAGANDA IN FRANCO'S SPAIN: THE SPANISH EDITION OF THE READER'S DIGEST, 1952-1962

By

Carlos Quintero Herrera, B.A.

Thesis

Presented To The Faculty Of The Graduate School Of

The University Of Texas At Austin

In Partial Fulfillment

Of The Requirements

For The Degree Of

Master Of Arts

The University Of Texas At Austin

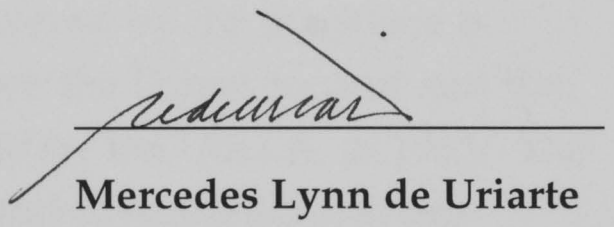
May, 1994

AMERICAN COLD WAR PROPAGANDA IN FRANCO'S SPAIN:

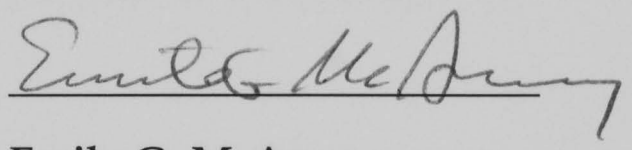
THE SPANISH EDITION OF THE READER'S DIGEST,

1952 - 1962

APPROVED:



Mercedes Lynn de Uriarte



Emile G. McAnany

To Francisco and Manuela, my parents

ABSTRACT

AMERICAN COLD WAR PROPAGANDA IN FRANCO'S SPAIN:
THE SPANISH EDITION OF THE READER'S DIGEST,
1952-1962

BY

Carlos Quintero Herrera, Master Of Arts
The University Of Texas At Austin, 1994
Supervisor: Mercedes Lynn De Uriarte

This work analyzes the role of the Spanish edition of the Reader's Digest as an instrument of American Cold War propaganda during the 1952-1962 period, when Spain was under the rule of Francisco Franco's dictatorship. The United States supported its economic and military expansion in Western Europe after World War II through the official propaganda produced by its information agencies such as the C.I.A. and the U.S.I.A. and through the socialization values carried by the American media. The Reader's Digest, as the most widely read magazine in the world, played a major role in this scheme. The propagandistic nature of the messages conveyed by the magazine is described by a comparative analysis between the Digest content and the suggestions made in a report commissioned by the U.S.I.A. in 1953. The focus of the analysis is the promotion of anti-Communist and pro-Capitalist values as the main ideological components of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

1. THE READER'S DIGEST 7

1.1 DeWitt Wallace 7

1.2 Growth and Success 12

1.3 The Reader's Digest Goes International 16

1.4 The Spanish Edition 18

2 THE HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK 24

2.1 Ideology and Foreign Intervention in the Spanish Civil War 24

2.2 Post-Civil War Spain and World War II 30

2.3 Post-World War II Policy: The Cold War 34

2.4 U.S.A.-Spain relations 36

3. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK 41

3.1 A Propaganda Model 41

3.2 Propaganda and Cultural Imperialism 49

3.3 Content Analysis 54

4. THE ANTI-COMMUNIST VALUE 61

5. THE PRO-CAPITALIST VALUE 92

CONCLUSIONS 128

BIBLIOGRAPHY 136

VITA 143

INTRODUCTION

My main motive of choosing to examine the role of the Reader's Digest as an instrument of U.S. propaganda in Spain during the 1950s and 1960s is a sentimental one. I was inspired by the early memory of my bedside copy of the Digest. By the time I was able to read my parents had lost interest in the magazine, so the issues I read were those from ten and twenty years before that we still saved. I enjoyed most reading the jokes, the "Remarkable Remarks" and the anecdotes from the "Life in These United States" and around the world. Besides, the attractive headlines always made me look at the long articles—ten to twenty pages— that dealt with more serious topics. I read securely about a world clearly divided into heroes and villains. Those readings developed my interest in the political speeches delivered in my Catholic school, when we were in fourth grade and still mourning Franco. As a result, I can very lucidly remember contemplating countless variations of a same plot to kill the Secretary General of the just legalized Spanish Communist Party, an ideology so reviled by the Reader's Digest. I might have grasped those young ideas from other sources than the magazine, but we never talked politics at home, and on T.V. I only watched soccer games and cartoons.

Fifteen years later, with the Cold War apparently over, I wanted to revisit the Reader's Digest to analyze its impact and significance in a critical period of the recent history of my country—and my own.

The arrival of Reader's Digest in Spain was but one element in the long chain of U.S international maneuvers that—friendly and hostile—have shaped Spain's and many other countries' internal affairs in the twentieth century. Together with common policies, military bases, economic investments and consumer goods, the U.S. tightened its links with Franco's Spain through the introduction of numerous cultural and ideological products, Apart from Hollywood movies and cultural exchange programs, the Digest, with its unquestionable appeal to the masses, was probably the most influential instrument of American penetration in Spain during the 1950s.

What makes this U.S.-Spanish friendship special is the fact that, while the U.S. was supposedly trying to promote democracy in a world shattered by the war against authoritarism in the form of Nazism, Spain was ruled by a dictatorship with close political ties to the defeated ideology and a tight censorship hold on materials introduced to the citizens in Spain. At the same time, the Digest, a magazine promoting the essence of the deepest American wholesomeness— Protestantism, individualism, Capitalism, optimism—was being introduced in a country overwhelmingly Catholic and with a culture and social conditions very different from the American ones. Yet the magazine was an overnight success. Why? What convergence of values led to the

compatible relationship between the publication and Franco's dictatorship? Why was the Digest a darling of the United States Information Agency: the U.S.I.A.? This thesis seeks to answer these questions by exploring how the values promoted by the Reader's Digest—and thus, perhaps by other American media—can be used to foster citizen and government alliances in regimes other than democratic. It is the intent of this research to analyze the mutual compatibility between the messages carried by such media and the objectives of U.S. foreign policy.

To put the analysis in the broadest possible context, Chapter One analyzes the phenomenon of the Reader's Digest. The magazine and its founder, DeWitt Wallace, have never received the attention from media or scholars that other publishing moguls and opinion-shapers like William Randolph Hearst or Henry Luce have. Wallace always kept a low profile, but the figures talk about the magnitude of his enterprise: Starting with a $1,300 loan in 1922, he made the Digest the most widely read magazine in the United States. Then, in the 1940s, he went to make it the most popular magazine in the world. Seventy years later, in 1992, the empire he created had $2.614 billion worldwide revenues, more than half from international operations. The Reader's Digest remains the most widely read magazine in the world, publishing 41 editions in 17 languages, with a total monthly circulation of 28 million, read by an estimated 100 million people (The Reader's Digest

Association, 1992). It soon became a symbol of the United States, like Coca-Cola or Ford, promoting the national image and values all over the world. In Spain, it began publishing in 1952, with a circulation of 90,000. During the 1960s it also grew to be the most widely read magazine, with a circulation there of 250,000 copies a month.

But the relevance of the Digest's role in Spain cannot be understood outside the socio-political circumstances of the nation. Chapter Two approaches the historical framework into which the Digest was introduced. It describes how the United States and its allies, acting in their own interests, permitted—if not promoted—the rise of Franco's dictatorship through a bloody civil war. This chapter relates how his regime was later rejected as a punishment for his ideological attachment to the Axis. It also shows how, as soon a new political situation—the Cold War—required it, Spain was welcomed to align with the Western democratic countries in one of the antagonistic blocs that the Truman doctrine helped create in opposing Communism in Europe. Franco's determined anti-Communist attitude became his best political tool abroad and the key in the evolving U.S. tolerance toward his dictatorship. These warming relations which with the signature of the Pact of Madrid in 1953.

Chapter Three provides the theoretical and methodological framework for this study. Drawing from Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky analysis of mainstream media as a propaganda model and Herbert Gans study social and political values underlying U.S. media

content, this thesis explores the role of the Digest as an ideological instrument in the service of the interests of the status quo. In the case of the Spanish editions, it is further analyzed as a genuine propaganda instrument with a content shaped to conform to the suggestions of the United States Information Agency. This latter aspect is examined through a comparison between the magazine's content and the suggestions provided by a confidential study commissioned by the U.S.I.A. and carried out by a group of prestigious social scientists in 1953. The last section of this chapter details the methodology, which relies mostly on a qualitative, rather than purely quantitative approach, to the content analysis of the articles in twenty-two issues of the magazine randomly selected from the 1952-1962 period.

Chapters four and five are dedicated to this content analysis centered upon themes that indicate pervasive anti-Communism and pro-Capitalism values, which prove to be significant for U.S. propaganda purposes during the Cold War as spelled out by the U.S.I.A. in its recommendations report. These chapters contain detailed qualitative descriptions of the articles containing the values; a brief quantitative account of the results and summary of the main points of discourse.

It is hoped that the research will contribute in some useful way to the continuing debate about the role of U.S. media in world politics.

Finally, there is a personal objective. In revisiting the Spanish edition of the Reader's Digest, the little boy captivated by the simple

solutions advanced by the magazine to life's challenges may become reconciled with the man who now confronts a far more complex reality than then anticipated.

CHAPTER 1

The Reader's Digest

1.1 DeWitt Wallace

If there is a point on which the Reader's Digest's critics and biographers agree, it is that DeWitt Wallace was the sole individual responsible for creating and giving a personality to the magazine.

John Bainbridge, in his early, critical book, said that "The Digest is Wallace's baby, and it reflects nearly everything about his father, from his capsulated social and economic opinions down to his taste in humor" (Bainbridge, 1947: 9).

Samuel A. Schreiner, who worked more than 15 years as an editor for the magazine, quotes another former editor who described Wallace as being a perfect Digest character:

> So he is. It would be hard to imagine a life that more amply fulfills in the flesh all those optimistic, individualistic, patriotic, philanthropic and practical ideas expressed within the pages of the little magazine (Schreiner, 1977: 31).

Looking for the origins of Wallace's personality, there is also broad accord in pointing to the fact that he was a "p.k.," a preacher's

kid. Born in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1889. His father was a devout Presbyterian minister; professor, dean and later president of the church-related Macalester College. His mother was the daughter of a reverend.

The pre-socialization for the magazine does not stop here: The Digest co-founder, Wallace's wife Lila Bell Acheson, was likewise daughter and granddaughter of Presbyterian ministers. The couple was introduced by her brother Barclay, who attended Macalester with Wallace and later became—in addition to a minister—the director of the Reader's Digest foreign editions.

These facts had an obvious influence in Wallace's world view, on its problems and how to fix them. He understood the potential of the Digest to serve as a pulpit besides being both an adventure and a very profitable business. Bainbridge (1947: 135) describes the reaction of an editor who read for the first time an article published in the Digest: "Sounds like some goddamn preacher wrote it," he said. Bainbridge corroborates that impression: "This offhand summary is not far from the truth. Wallace, whose family and editorial staff are sprinkled with preachers has an evangelical streak visible at a hundred yards."

Despite the environment, Wallace was not the average p.k. James Playsted Wood, biographer of the "authorized" history of the Reader's Digest, wrote about the young DeWitt as compared to his conventional brothers and sisters:

> DeWitt Wallace was too curious, too readily imaginative, and too restless to be a dutiful scholar. He admired his father deeply, but they were too much alike, and Presbyterian Macalester was too confining an environment for the son (Wood, 1967: 7).

After traveling around the East Coast—Boston, New York— and helping rebuild earthquake-shattered San Francisco, Wallace entered Macalester College in 1907 at age eighteen. Wallace excelled more as an athlete than as an academian. He spent his summers playing semipro baseball in North Dakota and working in the hayfields of Montana. At the end of his sophomore year, he went to Colorado to work in his uncle's bank. Boredom introduced him to reading current mass publications. That winter of 1909 he came up with the concept of what twelve years later would become the Reader's Digest formula (Wood, 1967: 8; Schreiner 1977: 34). Wallace discovered that certain articles had more "enduring value and interest" than others. Soon, he began keeping a card file of those that he considered the best.

He chose to return to college at the University of California at Berkeley instead of the constricting Macalester. In his own words, Wallace concentrated the efforts of his two-year stay there toward becoming "The Playboy of the Western World" (Wood, 1967: 8; Schreiner, 1977: 34). He would keep working on this image throughout his adulthood (Heidenry, 1993).

In 1912, Wallace dropped out and went back to St. Paul, where he had his first contact with the magazine business: writing promotional

letters for Webb Publishing Company, which issued farm magazines and textbooks about agricultural topics.

In 1916, after leaving Webb, with the knowledge he acquired there Wallace put together a booklet listing the publications issued by federal and state departments of agriculture: "Getting the Most out of Farming." He sold it to banks, feed stores and other establishments that would, in turn, distribute it as promotional material to their customers. The success of the enterprise gave him an idea of the potential of a similar project aimed at a more general audience.

Badly injured while serving as a volunteer to the French front in World War I, he polished the idea and format of the future magazine while he recovered. During his convalescence in the military hospital, he practiced his technique of selecting the best articles. He found that most of them were way too long and could be trimmed to a quarter of their original length without losing essential content (Wood, 1967: 12).

In 1918, Wallace returned to the United States with a very clear notion of what he wanted to do. He spent six months preparing a sample issue of an original little magazine made of selected and condensed articles from other publications. Humor, sex, medicine, the art of living, and most of the key topics of the Digest as it later would be known were already there. Its title expressed its philosophy: "The Reader's Digest. 31 Articles Each Month From Leading Magazines, Each Article of Enduring Interest, in Condensed and Permanent Form. January, 1920." *Literary Digest, The New Republic, Vanity Fair,*

National Geographic and *Ladies' Home Journal* were among the publications from which Wallace reprinted articles.

Wallace's pragmatism had seen the necessity of providing the general public with fast information in a "fast moving world" (Bainbridge, 1947: 32). As he expressed it in this model issue: "To acquire knowledge is not easy—few of us have time. You can acquire a broad understanding of the world—a broad education—by reading The Reader's Digest" (Wood, 1967: 15).

Schreiner (1977:35) suggests that Wallace's knowledge of the open plains of the West—California, Colorado, Minnesota, Montana, Wisconsin—provided the origin of his insights:

> They were largely peopled by middle-class entrepreneurs and sturdy pioneers, mostly of white, Anglo-Saxon, Christian stock. Often isolated from centers of any kind of culture, these peoples were avid for information [...]

He pitched copies of his first Digest to different publishers, but with no success. William Randolph Hearst, for instance, did not believe that the magazine could reach a circulation of more than 300,000 copies, too little for his interests (Schreiner, 1977: 36). After the initial setback, Wallace met and courted Lila Bell Acheson who, from the beginning, found the Digest to be a "gorgeous idea." He also found a job in the publicity department of Westinghouse Electric in Pittsburgh, although the happiness did not last long. Wallace was fired after just six months, a victim of the economic depression of 1921. This incident accelerated

the course of the events: Wallace began to send circulars to professors and nurses requesting provisional subscriptions. Encouraged by the responses, he involved Lila Acheson in the adventure and married her in October, 1921.

Back from their honeymoon, they had received $5,000 in subscriptions, subject to satisfaction with the first issue mailed. With another $1,300 loan, they had 5,000 copies of the first issue printed in February 1922. It differed very little from the sample Wallace had put together two years before. In fact, some of the articles were the same, proving the "endurability " of their value. “Remarkable Remarks,” “Whatever is New for Women is Wrong,” “Useful points in Judging People” and “Progress in Science” were some of them. Thus, the Reader’s Digest Association was founded in 1922 and its offices established in a New York Greenwich Village basement. Wallace divided the stock taking 52 percent of the company, and providing his wife—who quit a promising career as a social worker—the rest.

1.2 Growth and Success

From the start, the success formula was selection and condensation of previously published material. Wallace selected articles from the most popular magazines, then went to the editors and business mangers for permission to reprint. The answers were almost

always positive. At the beginning this was because—being sold exclusively by subscription—the magazine did not look like a serious competitor. Later, being reprinted in the popular Digest became a sign of prestige and a guarantee of massive readership. That fall, needing more room for their enterprise, the Wallaces moved to a garage-apartment in Pleasantville, close to New York City, and just seven miles from Chappaqua, where the Reader's Digest Association Headquarters would be constructed in 1936.

During the first years, Wallace was the Digest's only condenser and frequently worked in the reading room of the New York Public Library on 42nd Street. Within three years of its founding the Wallaces hired the first Reader's Digest full-time employee. At a price of $3 for a year's subscription, the Digest had in 1926 a circulation of 20,000 copies. Within three years, the figure became 200,000. Then Wallace put the magazine on the newsstands at 25 cents a copy. Its imitators were gaining ground against the Digest and creating some confusion. At this point, fearing that editors and publishers would reconsider their friendly predisposition toward the magazine, and as a measure against competition, Wallace proposed to most of the major magazines a contract giving the Digest exclusive reprint rights. In turn, Wallace would pay a modest reprint fee for every article used, part to the author, part to the publication. Magazines such as *The Saturday Evening Post, Life, Collier, Time, Harper's, Esquire, Fortune* and *The Atlantic* agreed to these arrangements.

In 1930, as protection against a possible breach of the reprint agreements, the Reader's Digest began publishing articles created by its own editorial staff. The magazine had grown quickly and unobtrusively. The publishing world was astonished when, in 1930, *Fortune* had the first serious look at the Digest's figures: Its circulation was 1,450,000 copies, and the annual gross income $2,178,000 (Schreiner, 1977: 43; Bainbridge, 1947: 49). Its readership and finances were by far stronger than those of most of the publications from which the Digest reprinted.

These revelations meant that Wallace had to begin to pay significant fees for the reprinted articles. But its continuous growth and success allowed the Digest's enlargement of its editorial staff, and the consistent creation of new original articles. Gradually, staff-written articles began to outnumber those selected from other publications. The "in-house" articles were not spotted by most readers, who accepted them as genuine Reader's Digest selected and condensed material. The Digest would not publicly admit this practice until 1939. To be sure that the flow of articles would not stop, and trying to remain somehow loyal to its original concept, Wallace came up with the idea of "planting" articles. After generating an article in the already considerable Digest editorial department and offering it to another magazine to publish, it could be later "selected" and reprinted in the pages of the Reader's Digest.

Not all Wallace's collaborating publishers at that time accepted the new deal. The planting of articles drew harsh criticism, for the Digest was imposing upon others the obvious biases of its editorial views (Bainbridge, 1947: 62). Wallace justified the creating of original articles and their planting as an "inevitable development" (Wood, 1967: 48). With the experience acquired by the fast growth of his magazine, Wallace had a clear picture of what his audience wanted, and understood that he could easily tailor articles to their needs. He had the economic means and the "magic formula." In fact, the original Digest articles were the most popular among the public. A turning point was the publication of "—And Sudden Death" in 1935. The article, a gory account of the dangers of reckless driving, came entirely from Wallace's mind, who assigned one of his editors to write it. It become an example of public service, used by many organizations and reprinted four million times.

Obviously, DeWitt Wallace had a grasp for what the public wanted to read. When criticized about the magazine's conservatism and scarce cultural value, he would argue that it "expressed the American mind" (*The New York Times*, 1981a). A week after his death, in 1981, *The New York Times* wrote:

> [...] All three [Wallace, Henry Luce and Louis B. Meyer], perhaps inadvertently, are partially responsible for the American self-image. Trying to reflect it, they also helped create it. [...] It [Wallace's magazine] always implies that there is no problem without a human solution. Small

> wonder so many Americans chose to make the voice their own. (*The New York Times*, 1981b)

Bainbridge called it "Dr. Wallace's Magic Formula" (Bainbridge, 1947: 133-177) and defined its main ingredients as clericalism, optimism, simplism, dogmatism and "Wallace himself."

1.3 The Reader's Digest Goes International

By 1936 The Digest included a school edition, talk radio shows and other successful ventures. The expansion plans of The Reader's Digest Association took an international turn. This was both business and editorially wise. As Wallace put it, "A logical extension of the magazine's desire to serve people" (Schreiner, 1977: 188).

The process began in London in 1937 with the launching of the British edition. After four years of planning, the Spanish-language Latin American edition was introduced in 1940, as world conflicts grew. It was published in Cuba and then distributed to the other Spanish-speaking countries. The rest of the hemisphere was covered two years later with the Portuguese edition published in Brazil and also distributed in Portugal.

Explaining the reason for this edition, Wallace wrote:

> letters from all over the world tell us that the Reader's Digest is a most effective interpreter of the United States to those living in other countries [...] readers everywhere join

> in emphasizing the need for extending the interpretative influence of the Reader's Digest throughout those countries where a clear conception of the United States will promote an alliance of interests for the cause of peace tomorrow (Wood, 1967: 155-56).

As discussed in chapter three, it was intended to counteract the fascist propaganda that the Axis nations were introducing in Latin America during World War II. Its content was selected from articles previously published in the U.S. edition. Also in 1942, right at the height of World War II, the second European edition appeared in Sweden. Wallace had to overcome two serious obstacles. On one side, the U.S. Office of War Information tried to take over the enterprise and publish the magazine itself to use it as direct propaganda. On the other, Nazi Germany tried to block the move. (Wood, 1967: 156-57)

In 1943, the Arabic edition was distributed in Egypt. In this case, the Office of War Information would ease the difficulties posed by the war (Bainbridge, 1947: 124-25). Distribution was stopped in 1947 and re instituted in 1956. The war greatly affected the Digest's intense activity abroad. It published four special editions for the American troops in the Mediterranean, Pacific, Asian and European war theaters. It was printed in Egypt, Australia, India and France, with a combined circulation of over two million copies (Bainbridge, 1947: 113).

After the war, Western European circulation became the Digest's main target. Brigadier General Paul W. Thompson, a retired general from the U.S. Army Ground Force, joined the Association and took

over the management of international editions. He was assigned to establish the French, German, Austrian, Belgian and Swiss editions (Bainbridge, 1947: 124). The optimistic approach of the magazine in particular, and everything coming from the victorious United States in general was very welcome in post-war Western Europe. These editions came "in many cases, at the urging of readers in the countries for which they are published and in some instances [...] at the direct request of governmental official in those countries" (Wood, 1967: 156).

By the time the Digest began to be published in Spain, in October, 1952, it had 26 editions in English, German, Korean, Danish, Finnish, French, Italian, Japanese, Norwegian, Portuguese Swedish and Spanish, and its monthly circulation exceeded 16,000,000 (Baylon, 1988: 315-16).

1.4 The Spanish Edition

Reader's Digest senior editor Daniel McEvoy introduced the magazine in Spain. He had been assigned the almost unthinkable enterprise of selling the magazine to the recently defeated and humiliated Japan, which he accomplished successfully. Now McEvoy faced an equally challenging task due to the special social and political circumstances of a post-civil war Spain, gripped by Franco's dictatorship, which will be analyzed in the next chapter.

McEvoy, a Catholic himself, called for assistance from the Spanish chargé d'affairs in Tokyo, Francisco de Castillo, who reminded

McEvoy of a missionary priest he once helped to gather money for the church in Hokkaido. The priest, grateful for the favor, wrote for him a letter to Fernando Martín-Sánchez Juliá, the director of Acción Católica, the lay arm of the Church, which exercised a great influence in Spain's society and politics (Schreiner, 1977: 186-88).

The letter proved to be effective, and Martín-Sánchez arranged an interview with Franco for Barclay Acheson, who by 1951, was in charge of International Editions. Franco's response, as it was his norm, was vague, yet encouraging: "As far as I am concerned, there is no inconvenience." However, Franco's advisers submitted 28 conditions to Acheson for permission to publish. Among these conditions was an agreement that no Digest article criticize Franco or the Catholic Church. But the Digest did not at first accept such broad censorship. It took a year of negotiations to reduce the scope of restrictions. The magazine got permission to publish, but had to agree not to include in Spain any article against the Spanish government or the Catholic Church, just as the national media had to agree. American cardinals are believed to have intervened in the resolution of the disputes between the Digest and Franco. (Baylon, 1988: 40).

The first issue of the Spanish edition of the Reader's Digest appeared in October, 1952, with a handwritten welcome by Franco. Its sale price, 10 pesetas, was double than that of similar magazines. The success was immediate, and circulation grew from the 90,000 copies of the first issue to 150,000 in 1957 and 175,000 in 1959. It would later reach

250,000, becoming the largest circulating of any general-interest magazine in Spain.

The Digest kept taking advantage of Martín-Sánchez's support. In line with its protectionist policies, the Spanish government planned to pass a law intended to ban foreigners from owning newspapers or magazines. It what was known as "The Reader's Digest amendment," the Digest was kept out of the prohibition. The man from Acción Católica managed it to make the document valid from November, 1952. Martín-Sánchez served as consulting editor for "Selecciones del Reader's Digest Iberia." during the years covered by this study —1952-62.

In all international editions, the Digest would print every month just a selection of articles previously published in the U.S. edition. This was a further condensation of articles made available to U.S. readers from various sources. Thus, the Latin American and Spanish editions were in most cases titled "Selections of the Reader's Digest," or "Selecciones del Reader's Digest."

This policy lasted until the mid 1960s, when foreign editors were authorized to produce their own original or selected articles. For approval, however, these articles had to be sent to the New York headquarters. There they were translated into English, edited, translated back to the original language and returned to the country of origin, where the final linguistic adjustments were made.

The editorial line and philosophy of the magazine were always tightly controlled from Pleasantville, but this never seemed to diminish

the universal appeal of its content. In one of his few public speeches, Wallace addressed the issue:

> The Digest is the only truly international magazine published in fourteen languages and circulating in every free nation [...] there must be a reason for this phenomenal acceptance. There is. The Digest opens windows on the world, presenting problems that baffle us all and reporting progress that cheers us. It promotes human welfare and dedicated service to one's fellow man; it imparts knowledge of stirring achievements and significant developments in every vital field; it illustrates the potentialities of human beings for their own growth and for the betterment of the communities where they live [...] (Wood, 1967: 166).

The Digest was and is in fact the most international of the magazines, but the reasons for its success are more complicated than Wallace claimed. He had basically come up with the concept of a mass consumption magazine. Starting from a blueprint early devised in his mind, he just repeated it month after month, always using the same process, with the same technique, the same instruments and the same ingredients. Just as Henry Ford produced his Model T, Wallace created the assembly-lane publication (Bainbridge, 1947, 172-75). As Ford made the car available to the masses, Wallace did the same with the approach to universal knowledge provided by his magazine. Once he had successfully tested the product in the United States—the main market in the world—he could have the certainty that, like many other mass

consumption products, it would have success in every other marketplace.

The appeal of the magazine can be attributed to both its form and its nature. Regarding the form, Wallace had understood that, already in the 1920s, people had too much information to assimilate and too little time to do it. He made simplicity his motto: the articles were condensed to the maximum, the language trimmed from complex vocabulary, and even the size was reduced to fit into one's pocket. The simplicity was applied to the ideas too: the arguments were made in terms of black and white, without complexities that could confuse or make the reader feel uncomfortable. All problems had a simple cause and—always—an even more simple solution. Its periodicity was monthly, so the reader would feel minimally stressed, and to make things easier, every issue would include 31 articles, one for each day, so the reader could handily establish a personal schedule.

The content was designed in such a way that every issue was filled with a complete series of topics which, in one way or another, would always appeal to the interests of the reader: economy, animals, international politics, marriage, sex (not in the Spanish edition), religion, science, medicine, humor, biographies, and many other aspects of the human condition. Influenced by Wallace's preacher character, the treatment of these topics would always be optimistic, trying to extract the best that there is in the human being. But, at the same time, it was dogmatic. The Digest considered itself infallible, and never

accepted corrections or apologized for mistakes made (Christenson, 1965; Heidenry, 1993). Behind the facade of humanity and public service, the Digest was, after all, the pulpit from which Wallace spread his ideas. It gave a deceiving image of neutrality with its claim of being a selection of articles: for a start, it only selected those that agreed with the Wallace philosophy—which was extremely conservative politically—and with his particular conception of life in the United States, which he considered the paradigm of modern civilization. Later, it began to create its own pieces and even to "plant" them, without ever trying to make this of public knowledge.

When it began to spread the word abroad, Wallace would be greatly helped by the outcome of World War II, which made the United States the industrial, moral and political leader of the "free world." This made war-torn nations more receptive then to anything coming from the United States, from machines to policies and ideas. Wallace's notion of the Digest as a "window on the world" became a "window on America for the World" (Schreiner, 1977: 35). Instead of a burden, then, the American wholesomeness that the magazine tried to promote was another charm, especially in a backward and isolated country, as Spain was at the time.

CHAPTER 2

The Historical Framework

2.1 Ideology and Foreign Intervention in the Spanish Civil War

The history of modern Spain begins as the world moved toward World War II. After claiming neutrality in World War I, Spain went through a series of political struggles leading to civil war. As the economic impulse that World War I gave the country began to vanish, social and political unrest flourished: urban and rural revolts clashed against a repressive police force while, from 1917 to 1923, the Government was shaken by "thirteen serious crises and thirty less serious ones" (Vilar, 1977: 86). On September 1929, taking advantage of the discredited political institutions at the time—from monarchy to parliament—General Primo de Rivera became dictator with the consent of King Alfonso XIII. The "military Directorate" established by Primo de Rivera became a civil office in 1925 and a Consultative Assembly in 1927, as the dictator gradually lost support. He retired on January 1930 and Alfonso XIII permitted another dictatorship, headed by General Berenguer, amid a strong anti-Monarchist and Republican movement. In April 12, 1931, the Left won most of the urban areas in a municipal

poll and, on April 14, several cities proclaimed the Republic. The army could no longer guarantee the monarchy any further, and the king was forced to abdicate.

This did not end the conflicts. The Spanish II Republic suffered a tortuous existence during its five years of life. Berenguer's dictatorship and the Monarchy had collapsed, and Spain once again tried to establish the democratic experience that had proved so difficult during the previous century. A Republican and Socialist majority dominated the Constituent Cortes elected in May 1931. The new Government tried from the beginning to tackle the social, constitutional, educational, ecclesiastical and military problems that had dominated Spain during the nineteenth century. An agrarian reform was initiated, and the new Constitution proclaimed Spain "the Worker's Republic;" It separated State and Church and secularized the schools.

But this attempt was also doomed. As noted by the American Hispanist Stanley Payne, "This is not surprising, for political representation and self-government ultimately rests on social development, economic balance, and standards of civil culture" (Payne,1967: xi). Spain lacked most of the above.

The reasons for these deficiencies are complex, but it must be recognized that in the 1930s, the Spanish military, the Catholic church and the large landowners who held most of the economic and political power, blocked the way toward any kind of social progress.

After the elections in April, 1933, the Right obtained the majority in the new legislature. The social situation worsened, in a complete economic decline, with constant revolutionary movements and the consequent repressive responses. In February, 1936, Manuel Azaña's leftist Popular Front won the elections, but it did not appease either the working classes or, of course, the military. The military malcontent—patent since 1931— grew and so did the number of conspiracies.

In this climate, the *pronunciamiento* —the Spanish *coup d' état*—that led to civil war took place on July 18, 1936. Although originally masterminded by other generals, a conservative army officer in the Canary Islands, Francisco Franco Bahamonde, headed the rebellion against the government elected, supported by the Nationalist opposition, whose ideology drew inspiration from the ultra-Catholic Monarchists and the Falange. This political alliance—*El Movimiento* —shaped the bulk of the rebel movement's objectives: A nationalistic, authoritarian regime that would move Spain ideologically closer to Fascist Italy than to Nazi Germany.

The civil war that followed cost—depending on the sources—between 600,000 and one million lives. Franco, supported by Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany had far the superior military power. In May 1936 Franco had an interview in Seville with Herr Messerschmidt, the airplane manufacturer and member of the German cartel of weaponry exporters, where they outlined the terms of the future German aid. In

November, 1936, Hitler and Mussolini recognized the military opposition as the legal government of Spain.

Italy supplied airplanes and approximately 70,000 "volunteers" whose expenses where shared between Franco and Mussolini. Germany's assistance was more comprehensive and more brutal. It included economic and military aid, much of which benefited German interests. For example, commercial agreements provided German material aid throughout the conflict, but at full cost. Direct military assistance allowed Germany to use Spain as a training field for its weaponry and troops as it prepared for the later invasion of Europe. Although the German navy occasionally took part in military actions, its support focused at the technical level and on blockades (Vilar, 1977: 111).

Especially relevant, however, was the contribution of the German air force—the Luftwaffer, whose Condor Legion formed the core of the Spanish military air force. Among its atrocities is the destruction of Guernica, where thousands of unarmed civilians died as the Nazis tested phosphorous incendiary bombs for the first time in history (Tamames, 1973: 272-73). This action was immortalized in Pablo Picasso's famous painting of outraged protest—an art work which would eventually become a powerful message for peace.

The democratic nations abandoned the legal Spanish government. It received its greatest assistance from the Soviet Union, whose revolution to depose a monarchy and redistribute wealth had

ended only about a decade earlier. The Soviet Gosbank maintained the security of Republican funds deposited there to pay for defense. Products were purchased from the Soviet Union and other nations. In direct aid, the U.S.S.R. sent a limited number of technicians, trained Spanish tank drivers and pilots. However, the planes and material assistance sent were often delayed by the blockade of Spain's borders by France and Portugal.

In addition, International Brigades, made up of about 40,000 volunteers from around the world, came to defend the Republic. These included the famous Lincoln Brigade of almost 3,000 Americans, including a number of its important young writers like Ernest Hemingway, who became an ambulance driver. Some of his best novels—*For Whom the Bells Toll*—would later draw from those experiences.

European powers, France and England, however, fearing the consequences of a direct conflict with Hitler and Mussolini, retreated into non intervention politics despite pleas from Madrid for help to defend a legal government. Turning a blind eye to foreign invasion of Spain by German and Italian troops allied with the Spanish military mutineers, France and England led Europe in refusing aid. Most European states agreed to forbid the sale of any kind of arms, planes or ships to the Spanish government. A Non Intervention Committee was installed in London to enforce the policy. The Spanish government's legitimate protests were ignored. "While [Spain was] diplomatically

correct, this argument carried little weight in Europe, which feared that the Spanish conflict might evolve into a general European war" (Cortada, 1978:152-53).

The American position was also aligned with the non interventionists, although with some distinctive shades. In 1935, the American Congress had passed a neutrality law that did permit the sale of weapons to legitimate governments threatened by a domestic rebellion. However, the attempt of some American businessmen to take advantage of the situation was curbed by an embargo law passed in a record speed in January, 1937. The door was closed to any kind of military aid or related supplies to Republican Spain (Tamames, 1973: 280-81). Nevertheless, the law was not applied to oil supplies for the Nationalists, and thus Texaco conceded wide credit to Franco's forces. The American automotive industry—Ford, General Motors, Studebaker—used their European subsidiaries to provide the rebels with transportation vehicles.

The struggle in Spain had implications far beyond its borders. Although the Spanish people bore the brunt of the conflict, these were the opening scenes for World War II. They also provided an early indication of actions that would be taken by the U.S. government in later Latin American struggles.

> Both sides, for propaganda purposes and to win foreign support, presented the war as a battle for the ideologies that divided Europe. The Generals presented themselves as Crusaders defending European civilization against a

> Communist plot rather than as defenders of Spanish conservative interests. For the left, the war was part of the wider struggle of democracy against fascism. What was in its origins a domestic tragedy thus became the great divide in the politics and intellectual discourse of Europe and Latin America. (Carr, 1980:153).

The Spanish Republican army fell to the military revolt and armed intervention by Germany and Italy on April 1, 1939. Franco became Premier and *Caudillo* of all the Spaniards "*por la gracia de Dios*," the aid of the Axis and the consent of Western democracies. In 1969 he and the Cortes designated Prince Juan Carlos—grandson of Alfonso XIII—to become king, hoping to guarantee in this way the continuity of the institutions and spirit of Francoism. Franco headed the Spanish regime until his death, in November 1975 and Spain became a democratic Monarchical Constitution in 1976 with Juan Carlos I its king.

2.2 Post-Civil War Spain and World War II

Spain's role in World War II set the course for later difficult international relations with the Western powers. Just a few days before the civil war was over, Franco established formal links with Germany, Italy and Japan through the "Anti-Komitern" pact, a political agreement against international Communism. In addition, he also secretly signed the "Spanish-German friendship treaty," that allied Spain Germany.

(Tamames, 1973: 534-35). With the September 1939 invasion of Poland by Nazi troops, however, Spain declared its official neutrality.

In October, 1939, Franco described Spain's position in the conflict:

> "To be always ready to do whatever is in our hands, with no limitations or reserves, to conciliate or, that is to say, to re-conciliate the peoples who fight today, because in that way we serve the historic destiny of our fatherland and defend the Western civilization, our civilization, which for Spain is sacred" (Chamorro and Fontes, 1979: 19).

With this, Franco meant "non intervention and taking advantage of the ties with Italy and Germany, trying not to hurt excessively the allies' susceptibilities" (Chamorro and Fontes, 1979: 21). This policy allowed Spain's attitude shift as the winds of war did. As Whitaker comments (1961:3) "no one has ever accused Franco of intentionally backing a loser." As a consequence of the civil war, the country's national income had fallen back to nineteen-century levels (Carr, 1980: 155) and, in these circumstances, acting otherwise could have been suicidal. Thus, Franco's tactics would go from the "pro-Axis" attitude to "neutrality," depending on the development of the military and diplomatic campaigns (Whitaker, 1961; Chamorro and Fontes, 1976; Tamames, 1973; Vázquez Montalbán, 1974). The pro-Axis phase covers from 1939 to 1941. In June, 1940, as a consequence of the rapid German advances in France, Franco changed Spain's status of "neutrality" to "non belligerency," which permitted economic and diplomatic support to one of the adversaries, in this case Germany, whose planes, ships and

submarines were sporadically admitted in Spanish airfields and harbors. This brought Spain very close to entering the conflict, but the marked nationalistic and imperialistic component of the regime turned out to be a hindrance in the alliance with the Nazis. In their interview in the French-Spanish border in October, 1940, Hitler could not guarantee Franco the satisfaction of his aspirations over Gibraltar and the French territories in North Africa, so there was not an agreement. Defeats in the Russian front and the allied landing in Casablanca in November, 1942, marked the beginning of the fall of the Axis armies and the Spanish government's withdrawal toward more neutral positions.

After several ambiguous diplomatic movements, the first sign of a definitive change toward an effective neutrality was the agreement over the "Iberian Pact" in December, 1942. The pact between Franco and Portugal's dictator, Salazar, was intended to reinforce both countries' neutrality and create new venues of mutual aid. The Nazi defeat in Stalingrad and Africa, and constant diplomatic pressures from the United Kingdom and the United States ended up defining the regime's position in the war. Franco cut off any remains of his aid to Germany—specially wolfram—broke off relations with Japan and began to favor the use of Spanish territory for allied military operations.

Even during part of the neutrality period however, Spain kept a belligerent position regarding the Russian front: It was not until October, 1943, that the last volunteers from Spain's "Blue Division" returned from fighting in Leningrad alongside German forces. Spanish

diplomacy justified this intervention with its "theory of the two wars." According to this, the war in Europe was divided in two: The war between Germany and the allies, and the war between Germany and Communist Russia; Spain declared its neutrality in the first one, but alleged that it could not do so in the second. Thirty years later, Fernando María de Castiella, Spanish Foreign Affairs Minister, would explain that

> "Spaniards went to fight in 1941 where their real enemy was: the Soviet Russia, the main cause responsible for the tragedies Spain suffered during the civil war [..] that Russia that does not allow us to be neutral because, in its continuous aggression, forces us to act permanently in legitimate defense, as today's Western free nations well know, and Spain does since 1936" (Vázquez Montalbán, 1974: 87-88).

Spain's erratic and ambiguous policy during the war and its clear ideological alignment with the Axis did not allow it, despite the diplomatic efforts at the end of the conflict, to become an ally of the "free nations." The regime's internal measures of limited political liberalization, intended to transform the totalitarian appearance of the regime—among them the suppression of Falangist presence in the government—did not change the United Nations decision in 1946 to exclude Spain from the organization. An economical blockade—only broken only by President Juan Peron's Argentina—accompanied the political isolation. It represented the beginning of a period of

international ostracism for Franco's Spain, aggravated by the nationalistic and autarchic nature of the regime's policies.

The seclusion, however, did not debilitate the *Caudillo*'s position nor did it last long. In November,1947, the United Nations failed to ratify the condemnation from the previous year. The United States vote, among others, prevented U.N. from doing so. By 1947, U.S. preoccupation with Communism was already becoming the cornerstone of its foreign policy. Spain's long anti-Communist position was beginning to win it some favor. As the preoccupation of the Western democracies shifted, so did their evaluation of Franco's regime.

2.3 Post-World War II Policy: The Cold War

The Peace Conference in Paris in 1946, revealed profound differences between the United States and the Soviet Union that would shape American post-war foreign policy, what Walter Lipmann called with so much foresight the "Cold War." Previously, in 1945, in his famous speech at Westminster College in Fulton, Churchill had dropped the "Iron Curtain" and coined the image which would symbolize the ideological bases on which U.S. President Truman and Secretary of State George Marshall developed their policy: A strong Europe was needed to face the imperialistic expansionism of the Soviets, which gripped its territories behind an impenetrable border.

The United States was in the best position to lead the process; it had gained world power status by winning World War II and, with the assistance of the allies and the Soviet Union, by liberating Europe. An expanding economy revolving around the military-industrial complex provided a need for new markets. A devastated Europe needed to rebuild.

The strategy designed to assure the European recovery, the Marshall Plan, further ruptured relations between the countries of Western and Eastern Europe. The philosophy of Truman's doctrine—the basis for the plan—officially was "to re-establish the world economy and to create the social and political conditions that allow the existence of free institutions." For the Soviet Union, the perception of U.S. goals through the use of the Plan was quite different. The Soviet government believed that the Marshall Plan was meant to solidify the ascendancy of Western powers:

> "The American credits won't be used for the economic re-establishment of Europe, but will be used by some European countries against others, in the way that it suits the best the industrial powers in their struggle for the world hegemony." (Chamorro and Fontes, 1976: 37-38).

The Soviet Union feared that the United States would become the center of European decisions in the post-war era, as indeed it did. In fact, the Marshall Plan was built to divide Europe. It created an alignment on Western Europe between winners and losers from World War II in order to construct one of the antagonistic blocs that would

define world politics for the next fifty years. With the claim of a common Communist enemy against which to arm, the United States advanced the continent capital; it marketed reconstruction and military facilities. As a result of a tightly linked U.S. economic and foreign policy, European and American interests and policies converged while Washington held the power cards. Europe's need to reconstruct and the United States need to curtail growing Soviet power energized these anti-Communist policies.

Meanwhile, Franco's government, in an atmosphere of inflation and poverty, tried and failed to whip up a national reaction. Following with his attempts to give the regime a less authoritarian image abroad, Franco camouflaged the dictatorship as a regency while he struggled to obtain support from Falangists,

Catholics and the son of Alfonso XIII, Don Juan de Borbón. This peculiar political situation delayed Spain's integration in the Western bloc for five years.

2.4 U.S.A.-Spain Relations

In April,1948, the American Congress authorized the first credits to European countries within the Marshall Plan. An attempt to include Spain was blocked by Truman's veto. However, the President specified that the there would be the option for Spain to apply for credits to American banks.

At the same time, the situation in Europe was rapidly deteriorating with the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia and the Berlin blockade by the Soviet Union; U.S. anti-Communism grew tougher. In this climate, the first American military mission arrived in Madrid, headed by Senator Chan Gurney. He would declare that "Anyone who wants to resist Communism must understand the convenience of getting Spain into the United Nations" (Tamames, 1973: 553-54).

Events to include Spain continued. In February, the Chase National Bank approved a credit to Spain to buy American goods. In March, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was created as the main U.S.-European defense mechanism. The contacts between Spain and the United States were gradually bridging gaps. In January, 1950, Secretary of State Dean Acheson declared that his country was ready to support Spain's admittance to the United Nations. Spanish diplomats in Washington responded that "Spain would like to help the United States to stop Communism, sending forces to Korea." A few weeks later, the U.S. Senate authorized Spain to solicit credits from the Import-Export Bank. On November 4, 1950—the day after Chinese troops invaded Korea—the United Nations Assembly revoked all its previous decisions against Spain. This granted the regime's full international recognition.

With his arrival in 1953, Eisenhower brought to the White House a friendlier attitude toward Spain than his predecessor had. The

climate of understanding between both countries culminated with the signature of the Pact of Madrid on September 26, 1953. The pact included three agreements covering a) economic assistance; b) aid for mutual defense; and c) supply of military equipment. The most important one, the second, authorized the United States to establish military bases in Spanish territory. Spain became integrated in an international defense complex known as the Ratford Line. This was a chain of American military bases surrounding the U.S.S.R., beginning in Spain and Morocco, continuing through Italy, Greece and Turkey, and ending in the Philippines and Japan.

The agreement was drawn for a period of ten years with provision for two five-year extensions. Under the economic and military aid agreements, the United States furnished Spain with $141 million in military end-items and $85 million in defense support assistance. By 1961, Spain had received $437 million (Stebbins, 1955: 208; Vázquez Montalbán, 1974: 114). These agreements supported established international military interests. They did not provide a compromise for the defense of the Spanish territory, as it was not a military alliance. The Spanish interests remained subordinated to those of NATO and other American allies.

But for Franco's regime, the Pact of Madrid represented consolidation. It was his most significant political success in the international arena. The ostracism and isolationism were over, and the "free world" was forgiving Franco's authoritarian regime in exchange

for his strong anti-Communist stance. On the other hand, Franco had put aside the nationalistic ideal of the *Movimiento*, and accepted an agreement that represented the cession of Spain's sovereignty to a foreign power. The United States controlled portions of Spanish soil and harbors—the military facilities— and its aircrafts were free to fly the Spanish sky. The Spanish government was never completely aware of the use that the American military was making of them. For example, the defense accord expressly prohibited introducing nuclear weapons into the country, but, in 1966, a B-52 bomber armed with four atomic bombs crashed with another U.S. aircraft, dropping its load on the coast and lands of Almería. None of them exploded, but radiation affected people, animals and plants.

The U.S. economic aid, which did not have a great impact on Spanish economic development (Cruz *et al.*, 1977: 42-46) was conditioned to the revision of Franco's economic policies. The autarchy of the regime was relaxed, and Spain began to walk toward a free-market Capitalism which would adopt to its full extent in the late 1950s. The other ideals of the *Movimiento*, imperialism, Catholicism, puritanism, were being imposed especially by means of a strict censorship that prevented the emergence of an alternative culture. As historian Raymond Carr notes, however, once Hitler had been defeated, these values became an isolated anachronism difficult to find anywhere else. Censorship could not always avoid the introduction of social values incompatible with those of the regime, especially through

imported American and Italian films, even after they had been "mutilated out of recognition" (Carr, 1980: 165-66).

Shortly before the Pact of Madrid was finalized—but negotiated concurrently— the Reader's Digest reached an agreement with Franco to allow distribution of its Spanish edition. It too introduced American values. These mostly coincided with those promoted by the Spanish government and the Catholic religion—anti-Communism, militarism. But it also brought others that contradicted them—individualism, American ethnocentrism and free market—once censorship had filtered out subjects like sex or birth control.

While the pact of Madrid made official the U.S. penetration of Spain, the Reader's Digest had preceded that agreement with its own mass media emissaries: stories and articles that presented the American way of viewing the world.

CHAPTER 3

Theoretical and Methodological Framework

3.1 A Propaganda Model

The Reader's Digest moved into Spain in October, 1952—a year before the U.S. military did—with great success, and soon became the most read general interest magazine, circulating more than 250,000 copies a month during the 1960s. Coming from a country with a socio-political situation very different from the Spanish one, this achievement presents commercial, social and political aspects worthy of analysis. This work will focus on the latter, especially as it may be further examined as an element of propaganda.

> The media plays a twofold role. While seen as something apart from business, they actually *are* a big business. But like the "nonprofit" churches, universities, law schools, professional associations, arts and political parties, the media also are an institution geared for ideological control. Their role is to reproduce the conditions of social and class stability, to carry out the monopoly management of image and information, *but in such a way as to engineer an appearance of class neutrality and an appearance of independence from the corporate class that owns them"* (Parenti, 1986:32).

Antonio Gramsci defines that ideological control as hegemony, and the managers of media as the manufacturers of majority consent for the ruling classes:

> The normal exercise of hegemony [...] is characterized by the combination of force and consent. Indeed, the attempt is always made to ensure that force will appear to be based on the consent of the majority, expressed by the so-called organs of public opinion —newspapers and associations (Gramsci, 1971: 80).

This concept of ideological control rules out appealing to a conspiracy theory to explain the phenomenon (Parenti, 1986:241-242; Schiller, 1982: 17; Herman and Chomsky, 1988: xii). The process is subtle and primarily shaped by the political economy of the mass media where decision-makers share world views. Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky (1988) examine the practice of media as a "propaganda model." To deconstruct its layered role they define five "filters" through which media messages must pass before becoming public discourse.

First, in broad scope, they mention the **Size, Ownership and Profit Orientation of the Media.** As Ben Bagdikian (1987) and Curran and Seaton (1985) have proved, the media follow the so-called natural trends of the free market. The trend toward concentration of the system is an aspect of this process. Although the number of information outlets may or may not be consequently reduced, it is obvious that the

plurality of the messages decreases as the number of different owners shrinks.

We observe a first variation of this phenomenon when Reader's Digest began in the early 1930s its policy of "planting" articles: Taking advantage of an organization's size and economic preponderance over its competitors, the Digest was able to increase the amount of information available; it was, however, just an extension of the magazine's points of view. Somewhat like a monopoly would, this compressed in redistribution the size of the original market share of access.

Garnham (1986: 31) points out the need for expansion as a consequence of the growth of the media company and as a start toward the concentration. Once the original niche has been successfully covered, the capital accumulated needs a new direction for investments. In the case of the Digest the entrance into school editions and radio talk shows was the first stage of its expansion; going international would be the next one.

The Reader's Digest was a pioneer in distribution by subscription and thus it had soon compiled a huge mailing list that would facilitate the diversification of its commercial enterprises. As somebody from its business department grossly put it, "with a list like that [18 million names in the mid-1970s] you can sell shit in a paper bag" (Schreiner, 1977: 80). With over seven million names on its list, the Digest commenced in 1949 the "Condensed Book Club" venture. Book

condensation had already been practiced in the pages of the magazine, and the club would make available to its readers more condensed works, with the advantage of being tailored to their tastes. After four years, the club had 2.5 million members.

Following this pattern, the Digest began to publish anthologies about different subjects in the mid '1950s, and reference books in 1963. The edition of music records began in 1959. Gradually, the Digest came up with special interest magazines—*American Health, The Family Handyman, Moneywise* and others—how-to and self-help books, series books, home videos and, lately, a T.V. edition of the magazine.

A decisive aspect of the political economy of big media conglomerates, mentioned by Herman and Chomsky (1988:13) is media company dependence upon and ties with government. In one degree or another the market is ultimately regulated by the State; large media firms will always be in need of policy support, especially when business involves international relations.

Although in its line of rejecting government intervention at many levels the Digest never accepted direct official subsidy or guidance, Wallace always counted on the support of the State Department and Office of War Information in the Digest international expansion during World War II (Bainbridge, 1947: 124-25; Heidenry, 1993: 152-74).

Without more extensive research capabilities, this writer could not find proof of this kind of help specifically in the process of

introduction of the Digest in Spain, However, previous assistance can be detailed in reference to its entrance to the country. So, it is logical to think that, without the efforts of the U.S. government for attracting Franco under its area of influence since the late 1940s, the Digest venture in the country would not have been encouraged in its attempts to establish a market. Franco's view of media was that it should be controlled, thus the Digest did not appear in an open "field." Ultimately, the compromises of the magazine with the Spanish State and Church allowed its very existence.

In Spain, legal censorship was imposed on the messages the Spanish Digest carried, as on the rest of the media. The "Law of the Press" of 1938, denied the role of the press as a "fourth power," citing the "harms that press freedom as understood in a democratic fashion had produced to a mass of readers daily poisoned by a sectarian and anti-national press" during the Republic. The press became a "national institution" to the service of the State (Fernández Areal, 1973: 178-80). Among other restrictive and punitive measures, the law contemplated universal prior restraint and mandatory pursuit of the guidelines provided by the government. These laws governed the press until 1966, when the new "Law of the Press," reflecting the opening of the regime, introduced a timid approximation to freedom of expression (Fernández Areal, 1973: 243-50).

But in conditions of free market/free press, censorship is inconspicuous, taking the form of **Sourcing** and **Flak,** two more filters

that Herman and Chomsky (1988: 18-28) catalog as sensitive responses to any information contradicting the interests of the ruling elite. Sourcing alludes to the symbiotic relationship the media is drawn into with powerful sources of information by economic necessity and reciprocity of interests. The media needs a constant flow of information to function, and it is not economically possible to cover all the places likely to produce the news. The image of objectivity that official voices project, and their ability to ease information gathering routines also contribute to media dependence on sources from government and corporate bureaucracies (Sigal, 1973; Fishman, 1980). In its purpose of promoting U.S. policies and lifestyle, the Digest often used sources from the Government and corporate world (Chapter Four).

Flak is defined as negative responses to media statements or programs. When these complaints are produced by the government or groups with substantial resources, flak may consist of suits, speeches, boycott campaigns and bills before Congress that can be both uncomfortable and costly for the media. All this is avoided by becoming an informal arm of government information campaigns, as the Digest did in its foreign editions, always promoting the interests of U.S. foreign policies and capital.

Another filter, a decisive market and ideological force is **Advertising**. As their main source of income, advertisers exercise a great power over which outlets will survive and which won't and thus impose their preferences, usually those of big business and government

policy. The first Digest international edition serves to illustrate this point:

> The main purpose of the 1940 Latin American edition of the magazine was to counteract the effect of the propaganda that the Axis' countries were introducing in the South of the hemisphere
>
> > A Spanish language edition for Central and South America had been considered, but the idea had been abandoned when a survey showed the costs prohibitive. It was reintroduced in 1940, when axis infiltration of South America made counteraction of the kind the Digest could provide seem advisable (Wood, 1967: 155).

Nelson Rockefeller, Co-ordinator of the Office of Inter-American Affairs, was the person in charge of conducting U.S. propaganda operations in Latin America in order to prevent Nazism and the possibility of war from spreading throughout the continent. He obtained a ruling from the U.S. Treasury Department which exempted from taxation the cost of advertisements placed by American corporations that were cooperating with his Office (Tunstall, 1977: 140-41). The Reader's Digest was one of the publications that took advantage of the situation through its advertisers. Since it began to look for financing, "high on the list of potential advertisers were American manufacturers and oil companies with large Latin American holdings or operations" (Heidenry, 1993: 154). Rockefeller understood the mutual interests of advertisers and government, and this tax-exempt advertising constituted 40 percent of all radio and newspaper

revenues in Latin America at that time. It was estimated that, by the end of the war, "75 percent of the news of the world that reached Latin America originated from Washington, where it was tightly controlled by the Rockefeller Office and the State Department" (Tunstall, 1977:141).

The equally significant ideological value of advertising will be treated below.

Examining the function of all these filters in relation to the Reader's Digest operations provides enlightening insights into the overall function of the publication as a component of mass media. However, the final filter is key to the success of the magazine in Spain

> A final filter is the ideology of **anti-Communism** (My emphasis). Communism as the ultimate evil has always been the specter haunting property owners, as it threatens the very root of their class position and superior status. The Soviet, Chinese and Cuban revolutions were traumas to western elites, and the ongoing conflicts and the well-publicized abuses of Communist states have contributed to elevating opposition to Communism to a first principle of Western ideology and politics. This ideology helps mobilize the populace against an enemy, and because the concepts is fuzzy it can be used against anybody advocating policies that threaten property interests or support accommodation with communist states and radicalism. It therefore helps fragment the left and labor movements and serves as a political-control mechanism. If the triumph of communism is the worst imaginable result, the support of fascism abroad is justified as a lesser evil (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: 29).

This filter predated World War II. Ever since the Russian revolution in 1917, advance of socialist ideas was seen by capitalists and

media as a threat to the status quo. Thus the anti-labor movement in the 1920s and the "red scare" in the 1930s had preceded the 1950s' McCarthyism and its witch-hunting which led to the anti-Communist discourse of the press. Although this trend reached its peak during the McCarthy era, it continued in various forms throughout the Cold War (Joel and Erickson, 1987; Parenti, 1988: 113-117; Aronson, 1973: 25-38).

3.2 Propaganda and Cultural Imperialism

With the onset of the Cold War and the adoption of Truman's anti-Communism doctrine, American militarism and economic expansionism operated efficiently within this ideological base to foster and legitimize it. As the United States grew into a super-power, its institutions reflected and supported its Capitalist ideology through the values that each promoted, socializing its citizens and those it reached in other countries to adopt these values as ones they would also support. Thus, in an example of classic hegemony, its mainstream media promoted these values.

The Reader's Digest, as the most international of all U.S. magazines—4,698,000 copies circulated monthly in its international editions in 1947—played a major role. The concept of propaganda stopped being rhetoric or a figure of speech and turned into a tangible reality. The U.S.I.A.—created in 1953 by President Dwight Eisenhower as the American official "information" agency— commissioned that

same year a study with the purpose of identifying and articulating the "'operating assumptions,' explicit and implicit that guided or underlay the daily work decisions [of the agency] and describe the areas of ignorance, confusion or internal contradiction that merited further investigation (Bogart, 1976: vii). Recommendations were made about how to support the agency in its objectives:

> "Take all the magazines distributed in those [allied] countries—*Time, Life, Ladie's Home Journal, Collier's, American, Reader's Digest*. Are they doing any good for America? [...] they are, because if they do nothing else that show our ads, they show our standard of living and how people get on here [...] It makes sense to show people behind the Iron Curtain that Americans live better than they do, and that under a free economy it requires less working time to buy a pair of shoes than under Communism" (Bogart, 1976: 93).

The team of social scientists that carried out this study—directed by Wilbur Schramm—defined the socialization power of mass-circulation magazines and their value as soft propaganda. They were postulating the principles of what, 20 years later, media critics would characterize as cultural imperialism:

> [...] the concept of cultural imperialism today best describes the sum of the processes by which a society is brought into the modern world system and how its dominating stratum is attracted, pressured, forced, and sometimes bribed into shaping social institutions to correspond to, or even promote, the values and structures of the dominating center of the system (Schiller, 1976: 9).

Schiller highlights the intimate relationship between this form of imperialism and the economic one, and how Truman's doctrine adapted itself to the political and economic situation created in the world after the war:

> Information moving between nation on the basis of "economic opportunities" and "competition", unimpeded by other natural or cultural considerations, affords American communications media the same advantages American commerce now receives from "free" world trade patterns that are also minimally controlled by national states. Accordingly, the material interests of American commerce and American mass communications find their expression in the early postwar declarations of freedom of speech and freedom of enterprise. Their joint interests are further promoted when, over time, it became apparent that the championing of freedom of communications (or speech) most often had as an indirect benefit, the global extension of American commerce and its value system (Schiller, 1969: 7).

Thus, given the political goals of the United States and the socio-cultural climate of the post war era, the early 1950s was an opportune time to introduce the Digest to Spain. The international community had approved Franco's strong man role as the lesser evil that would hamper the spread of Communism. U.S. banks had just begun to inject dollars into the Spanish economy. And the American Army was about to base its quarters a few miles from Madrid. It was, according to sociologist Armand Mattelart, "a traditional avant-garde [military assistance program] of the cultural imperialistic approach" (Mattelart, 1979: 60). With some delay with respect to its entry into other western

European countries, the Digest came along with the U.S. economic and military apparatuses to court the Spanish people with the "intellectual" arguments for such invasion. In its mission, the Reader's Digest would count on with the advantage of providing for Spaniards-—suffering under a strict censorship—their only window—Hollywood movies aside—to the events of the Cold War and to an outside world about which they barely received any information.

This is not to say that the hegemonic function of the Digest was conducted in the case of Spain by the imposition of State censorship. Spain represented a convergence of interests. It imposed censorship to limit the flow of ideas so the intellectual pursuits would serve the interests of the State. As a soft propaganda tool of U.S. interests, the Reader's Digest also sought to steer human thoughts and efforts toward the attainment of national goals. In this case, the U.S. anti-Communism and pro-American lifestyle messages were compatible with the goals of totalitarian Spain.

In Spain, hegemony and censorship interacted compatibly, for the symbol of "modernity" that the Digest represented for the Spanish population—with standards of living closer to the nineteenth than to the twentieth century—supposed a supportive value for Franco's totalitarian regime:

> They [symbols of modernity] confirm the plausibility of the vision, and they serve as a visible token of the government's commitment to the realization of all the hopes that are linked to the vision (Berger *et al* , 1973: 144).

The Spanish government allowed the diffusion of Digest, the messages that Wallace offered through his "window to the world"—many of them alien to the Spanish idiosyncrasy—because it was to its political advantage to do so. For the strict but shortsighted Spanish censorship apparatus, the Digest content presented no threat: It did not openly attack Franco or the Catholic Church. But by providing his constituency an approved view of the outside, Franco provided the illusion of expansiveness while maintaining a firm grip on the information available.

The subtlety of the Digest socialization process was favored by the magazine's little format and often soft and entertaining content, that would made its readers less aware of the kind of bias that pervaded the content of the articles:

> The communication industry puts in circulation recreation and entertainment saturated with judgment values and, at the same time, denies that they have an influence larger than the one of a momentary evasion and a happy state of relaxation [...] It can be proved that the content and format of the recreative messages, far from being free of values, have been deliberately conceived to promote the ruling institutional philosophy and behavior. Popular entertainment—as Erik Barnouw says—is basically propaganda in favor of the status quo (Schiller, 1982: 104-05).

This was not the case with the articles dealing with politics and economics, as they were clear in their editorial position of anti-Communism and pro-free enterprise, but applies to the pieces about the

"art of living" articles, the memories of "Most Unforgettable Characters," and in the even lighter anecdotes of the "Life in These United States." In all of them we can find the all-American "enduring values" that Wallace intended to promote. To a great extent, these coincide with the value system media sociologist Herbert Gans defined as underlying the American news content. These values, he said, shape the picture of what the nation, the society, and the individual who lives in it ought to be. A description and analysis of these values in the Spanish edition of the Reader's Digest is the subject of the next chapter.

3.3 Content Analysis

Leo Bogart extracted the U.S.I.A. study cited in the previous section from the confidential files of the agency. Being unofficial, it gives an excellent insight into propaganda operations otherwise conducted in secrecy. It will be used here as the basis for the comparison between the objectives and means of U.S.I.A. endorsed propaganda and Reader's Digest adaptation to the agency's standards. Especially useful for this purpose will be the study's sections dealing with "The Fight Against Communism" and "Projecting America."

Right after World War II, before the U.S.I.A. was created, there was a debate in the State Department's Cultural Division—successor of the Office of War Information— between the proponents of the "cultural diplomacy" and the "informational diplomacy" on how to

promote the image of the United States abroad. The former consisted of promoting cultural exchanges and other activities aimed to influence the cultural elites of other countries and create among them a favorable impression, in a form of "trickle-down" rationale. The latter wanted to emphasize "informational programs," which basically meant using radio, motion pictures and news to make propaganda. This approach generated suspicion in the administration, and the State Department opted for "cultural diplomacy." The advocates of this position and the experiment they carried out in 1947—expositions abroad of American modern art—was greatly praised in international artistic circles, but suffered immediate rejection by U.S. mainstream media, Congress, President Truman, and even the Un-American Activities House Committee. The accusations ranged from "elitist" to calling such art a "Communist conspiracy to undermine young people's natural perceptions, common sense and productivity" (Rosenberg, 1982: 215-17).

As the Cold War developed, "informational diplomacy" especially "fast media" took the place left by the promotion of high-brow culture. The U.S.I.A. and C.I.A. were created as independent agencies that carried out U.S. propaganda operations abroad. The U.S.I.A. report addressed the issue of low-brow culture—regarding publications like the Digest— in the following terms:

> "[...] American popular literature should be spread abroad. If some magazines carry stories that are detrimental to U.S.I.A objectives, the agency may exercise some control by

> holding back its usual routing procedure" (Bogart, 1976: 95).

The Digest fit comfortably in this scheme. It never saw its usual routing held back, as its content did not contradict the agency views. In its foreign editions, the Digest only received some rebuff during World War II when, in its anti-Communist zeal, it published articles considered then by the O.W.I.—U.S.I.A predecessor—as helpful to Nazi propagandistic aims (Heidenry, 1993: 161-62).

But the promotion of determined values is not an exclusive phenomenon of the Cold War, which inspired the United States to export them, or the Digest, which diligently served this purpose. Herbert J. Gans' decade-long study of major American magazines and T.V. newsrooms—the other framework of reference in this work's analysis—recognizes the presence in the news of a series of enduring values that he considers originated both in the journalists, and in the sources from whom they extract the information. These values, which pass through the filters described in the previous section, tend to be those favored by and reinforcing of the status quo in general and, as in the case treated here, of the U.S. political objectives and lifestyle. The underlying values served as reference for how Western societies should look in the context of the Cold War world order .

The values chosen for analysis herein are anti-Communism and pro Capitalism/free enterprise. They best represent the U.S. ideology

that its agencies and the Reader's Digest concurrently tried to transmit. There are other values analyzed by Gans—ethnocentrism, individualism, altruistic democracy, small-town pastoralism, moderatism, social order and national leadership—and others more specifically attributable to the Digest—optimism, Protestant ethic, militarism, sexism—less relevant to the point being made in this work, and whose examination would turn this analysis into an endless task, thus is left for others. This study focuses on the key values that allowed the Reader's Digest and U.S.I.A. goals to coincide.

The cited values are identified and explored through a content analysis of the Reader's Digest text. Wimmer and Domminick (1991: 157) consider as typical the definition of traditional content analysis made by Kerlinger (1986): "a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables."

However, this study relies both on qualitative and quantitative research. According to Krippendorf (1980), content analysis is valuable in making replicable and valid references from data to their context. Thus, an excessive focus on obtaining a scientific product works to the detriment of its goals. A strict and aseptic organization of the samples, the units of analysis and the construction of categories may lead to the compartmentalization of the text analyzed, and the consequent loss of context, perspective and meaning. In McQuail's words, it may result in a selective and distorting process, producing a way of "reading" content

"which no actual reader ever, under natural circumstances, undertakes (McQuail, 1987: 184).

Furthermore, the quantitative fashion of attributing meaning or salience according to the frequency of occurrence of references also tends to obscure aspects of contexts of reference or the internal relationships between them (McQuail, 1987: 184). This is especially clear when trying to analyze references to values and themes, as is the case here. Beyond that, quantitative is less useful than qualitative when analyzing cross-cultural impact. Thus, this study is more concerned with identifying the underlying messages in the text—its discourse—than with organizing and counting units of denotative meaning.

The traditional approach to content analysis is not dismissed here; rather, this work takes advantage of the flexibility of its boundaries regarding objectivity and reliability in favor of interpretation (McQuail, 1987: 185). Quantitative study is recognized as a valuable element of qualitative analysis, but as needing reference to context to provide insights. This study will borrow then from the structuralist, semiological (McQuail, 1987: 185-93) and discourse-analysis (Van Dijk, 1991: 108-16) approaches to media content, although without rigidly following either of them. With slight variations, this has been the method used in previous examinations of the Digest content (Bainbridge, 1947; Christenson, 1965; Rowse and Stillman, 1968; Schreiner, 1977; Dorfman, 1980, 1983; Goodman, 1982; Baylon, 1988;).

This analysis includes categorization and quantification—just the essential to guarantee the possibility of replicating the study and giving it validity in the form of statistical back up. The universe of analysis is the Spanish edition of the Reader's Digest from 1952 to 1962. These are the years of publication which coincide with one of the most intense periods of the Cold War. The interval is roughly delimited by two turning points in this political epoch: the signature of the Pact of Madrid between the United States and Spain, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, at the peak of "cold" hostilities between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Regarding Spain, this is also a most interesting period politically and historically: it was not until the decade of the 1960s that the Spanish economy expanded and Franco's regime began to show some signs of opening—internal as well as external—thereby lessening the exclusiveness and significance of the role previously played by the Digest in the country. The general conclusions to be drawn in this work are likely to be further applicable over time due to the "enduring" nature of the Digest values and the unchanging makeup of its content (Smith and Decker-Amos, 1985).

The sample includes 22 issues randomly selected, two from each year. It is probably more than enough when dealing with the Digest; previous studies of the magazine have tended to rely on a tiny number of samples. Dorfman reached the extreme using just two issues in his works; he explained this discrimination by arguing that:

> I thought that if the Digest can read all the articles in the universe (as well as the books, speeches and jokes) and choose only those which most served their purposes, didn't I perhaps have the right to do the exact same thing? (Dorfman, 1983: 140-41).

This work, however, serves to point out the validity of his analysis because all issues are so similar—almost formula driven—in their content.

Nevertheless, the purpose of a bigger sample is to have a wider range of text and so be able to select those pieces and references—and the connections between them—that better illustrate the values to be described. It also will provide a stronger and more scientific quantitative support.

The units of analysis are all articles in the magazine, including the condensed book at the end of each issue. The jokes and anecdote columns will be occasionally given an impressionistic review to add other perspectives to the analysis. The categories or variables whose presence defines the values will be constructed individually to fit the characteristics of each value. In the same way, the analysis will dwell more or less heavily on quantitative or impressionistic descriptions as the values analyzed require it. The author will alone be responsible for the analysis design and execution.

CHAPTER 4

The Anti-Communist Value

The same characteristics that Herman and Chomsky found in the use of anti-Communism as a filter for media content can be argued here as the most blatant value component carried by the Reader's Digest in this period of time. The non-specificity of the concept permits it to be used against any element threatening the prevailing order, from labor movements to government intervention in economic and social affairs, two of the priority targets for the Digest editorial attacks (Bainbridge, 1947:145; Christenson, 1965; Rowse and Stillman, 1968; Schreiner, 1977; Smith and Decker-Amos, 1985).

The possibility of focusing on a common enemy provided the U.S. expansionist policies with the adequate ideological center for its political, economic and military presence in western Europe and the rest of the non Communist world. The fight against Soviet Communism became the value to be exported. If Franco had declared the Soviet Union to be the true enemy of Western civilization during World War II, with his "theory of the two wars," the Digest was not too far behind; in 1943, when the U.S.S.R. was still an ally of the United States, Wallace published Max Eastman's article "We Must Face the Facts About Russia," in which redeemed Socialist Max Eastman

initiated the anti-Communist crusade four years in advance of President Truman.

McCarthyism and its "witch hunting" was not an isolated phenomenon, but an example of how deep the religion of anti-Communism had pervaded the American power structures, from Congress to the media and, of course, the U.S.I.A., always ready to make use of the concept's extreme malleability. Bogart summarizes what anti-Communism represented for the Agency:

> Because U.S.I.A. uses many different media and reaches a widely varying audience, the ratio of its "positive" to "negative" (or anti-Communist) output is not fixed. But in the eye of many persons in the Information Agency, the core task of the U.S.I.A. is to expose Communist atrocities, falsehoods and injustices.
>
> The media respond quickly to urgent field requests for anti-Communist materials and to every opportunity to "beat the Communist over the head." At the Voice of America, anti-Communist scripts are reported to be the most popular because they provide a common denominator. Anti-Communist propaganda is the same everywhere, whereas "Americana" [positive pro-American themes] have to be slanted for the target audience (Bogart, 1976: 71).

The report highlighted a series of six arguments to be pursued as the main anti-Communist themes. These are used here as the variables that define the presence of the value in the text:

> *1. The Communist idea is fallacious. A primary objective is to attack its basic concepts, symbols and techniques. To*

> *make it appear unattractive as a philosophy, critical disbelief in the intellectual validity of Communism must be induced. Communism must be portrayed as "not only deadly, but ridiculous." The class struggle is not the whole answer to the world's economic ills* (Bogart, 1976: 72).

In an article that appeared in the Reader's Digest of December, 1952, the issue of class struggle is addressed through an attack on Communist ideology in the unions. The piece, condensed from the *U.S. News and World Report*, dismisses the representativeness of unions for English workers and warns of the manipulation of these by Communist elements. It is based in a study made by an American researcher—Joseph Goldsmith— who joined a branch of the English teamsters' union for five years. He found "a pattern well-known to observers of other countries, but surprising for the English people." The pattern described by Goldsmith begins with the workers' lack of interest: "The union had more than 1,000 members, and their meetings were held in a room where only 50 people could be seated." Starting from this assumption, the development of the Communist plot is simple: A small group of Communist militants "infiltrate into the union, make most of the propositions and manipulate voting:"

> The Communists know that this [proposition of resolutions by a minimal communist representation] is a technique interference-proof, due to the lack of interest that most of the members show about what is going on in their unions[...]

As is common norm in the Reader's Digest, the arguments are simple, the allegations isolated from any kind of context, and the

exposed deeds arbitrarily selected—just one case is used to make the point (Bainbridge, 1947; Dorfman,1980, 1983; Schiller, 1976; Baylon, 1988; Christenson, 1965; Goodman, 1982; Rowse and Stillman, 1968).

Communist leaders are depicted as lacking any well-reasoned ideology and driven by little intellectual development or idealistic instincts. In "Probabilities for a World Peace," (December 1960) Stewart Alsop—"a distinguished correspondent"— comments on the international political scene. In a technique that is still found today in this kind of discourse (Acosta, 1979: 147) the author compares Khrushchev's attempts to spread Communism with Hitler's Nazism: "According to our view, this is madness. Khrushchev is an ideological madman, like Hitler. But Khrushchev has not lost his mind, he is not a clinical case as the other one."

In "Where is the U.S 'Decadence'?" (February 1961) a reporter from the British *Daily Telegraph* offers his particularly optimistic perception of the United States and a serious explanation for the phenomenon of Communism:

> After all, Communist subversion is part of the international atmosphere in our days, as the microbes in the air we breathe are. The same way some people get fever every year, some nations can "get" Communism.

That is as deep as the Reader's Digest goes in its analysis of the roots of Communist movements. As proposed by the U.S.I.A. report, Communism, its philosophy and its leaders are systematically ridiculed

and stripped of any meaningful content. Rather than an alternative to the Capitalist system, it is seen as an invalid ideological deviation of a small group that spreads the disease through propaganda or any manipulative trick. Articles in the Reader's Digest take the American society as its model, so no problem is perceived in the prevailing system suggesting the need for substantial changes.

> *2. Communism destroys human dignity and rights. Prick the conscience of the world. Alert everyone to Communist atrocities, such as the torture of American prisoners in Korea. Point up "crimes against humanity, perversion of truth, breaking of men's minds, violation of international conventions, and crime against natural law. Show that since 1917, the implacable purpose of the Communist rulers has been to reduce all men to the level of animals* (Bogart, 1976: 72).

This is one of the most frequent themes in the Digest. The dramatism of this kind of story seems to especially appeal to its editors. There is no limit to the goriness in some accounts of red atrocities. An article in the February 1961 issue, "Terror in Tibet" illustrates the methods used by the Chinese Communists to subdue the population in a country "dedicated to prayer and worship:"

> Firstly, Tibetans had to see how a group of Chinese women hit the lamas and tore their hair apart. Then, under death threat, the very Tibetans had to hit the victims also. Later, the lamas were taken into a well, and the Chinese made the Tibetans urinate over them [...] then they were chained by their necks, loaded with baskets full of human excrements, and taken town by town to be exhibited in front of the crowd.

The article "How Russia Sees Coexistence," (May, 1955) provides examples of the Communist lack of respect for international conventions and its unscrupulous manipulation of human beings. The author is "a special correspondent" for the *New York Herald Tribune* who "traveled around Russia for two and a half months" gathering opinions from the most diverse sources:

> Coexistence, a Turkish diplomat warned me, is the Soviet way to gain time and consolidate the advantages it has reached by annexing some 600 million souls since the end of World War II [...] In a diplomatic reception in Moscow, not long ago, Khrushchev astonished an English traveler by confessing to him that one of Russia's prime goals is 'to double its population." Nearby was the head of the Soviet Government, Malenkov, who, having heard that assertion, added: "and double it again."

The breaking of men's minds is another common tactic described in cold war anti-Communist discourse. Brain washing and the control of people lives are favorite themes in spy movies and in Reader's Digest articles alike. In "How the Spies From the Soviet Work," (November, 1952) J. Edgar Hoover explains how the Soviets recruit "Marxists without a party, misguided idealists and politically candid reformers:"

> The first thing they are asked to do is to cooperate without violating any law. For a long time the agents avoid putting the incautious in a situation in which he would have to commit a treasonous act. This is only decided when he is

> involved and comes to understand, too late, that he has been part of the espionage web for a long time.

When an agent decides to get married and leave the job, Hoover says, his superiors find a solution: "Don't worry, we'll solve the problem. What kind of wife do you want, permanent or temporary?"

> *3. The Communist system does not work. The difficulties that Communist regimes encounter should be stressed, particularly in output to anti-Communist areas* (Bogart, 1976: 72).

In the pages of the Digest, the anti-Communist messages come in pure anti-Communist discourse, but also in components of "Americana" propaganda. In one of these, "New Concept of Capitalism" (September 1956) a "distinguished observer of the United States, a foreigner, rules out some of the most common errors that many foreigners hold about that country;" to do so, he refers to the popular theme of the cost of living:

> The Soviet Union has superior natural resources, but in 1951, 50 hours of labor were necessary in the U.S. and 258 in the U.S.S.R. to be able to buy a cotton dress, a man's suit and a pair of shoes. Something different from the natural resources should explain the difference.

The Capitalist economic system as the natural one is an axiom in the Western world—"Capitalists Flourish in Russia" (June, 1954). The

Socialist educational system does not fare better than its economic system, says an ex-NBC Moscow correspondent in "Flaws in Russian Public Instruction" (December, 1960). The explanation is:

> Khrushchev's reorganization stresses labor and cares less about education. This is a reflection of his personality. As he had little basic instruction, he shows some disregard for the intellectual and disdains the theoretical scientist. He prefers the pragmatic man. His pedagogic goal does not aim to develop the mind, but to prepare workers, in a short period of time to satisfy his aspiration of catching up with the United States in the field of production.

The Digest never acknowledges any positive achievements in Socialist societies in the Digest is an impossible task. The magazine, which claims to just give the facts (Schreiner, 1977: 159-180) puts all its enormous research potential to work in search for those fragments of reality that better suit its views. Articles such as "Capitalists Who Prosper in Russia" (June, 1954) "Russia, Closely and From Afar" (March, 1955) "Home to Poland" (October, 1958) and "The Future is Ours, Comrade" (December, 1960) are endless accounts of the many malfunctions of Communist societies. The last two ones follow a trend spotted by Herman and Chomsky (1988) and by Parenti (1986): When there is a need for serious evidence of the abuses and flaws of Communism, defectors, informers and anyone who has had any kind of link to a Communist state are treated as objective experts. They are thus considered "even after exposure as highly unreliable, if not

downright liars" (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: 30). In "The future is Ours, Comrade," a condensed book, the expert is Joseph Novak, a "lesser bureaucrat in one of the satellite countries, who had the trust of the Soviet's high officials and was going to spend a long period of time in Russia invited by them." All his arguments are presented through conversations with "workers, students, soldiers and officials who tell him freely their impressions." Thus, the conclusions are based on opinion rather than on serious study. There is no way to assess the validity of the allegations made or why Novak converted. As Delwit and Dewaele comment:

> Their [the experts] inverted hyper-Stalinism—which takes the usual form of total manicheanism—is whitewashed simply because it is directed against Communism. The hysteria has not changed, but it gets a better welcome in its present guise (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: 30).

4. Communism is aggressive. In exposing its imperialistic ambitions, a parallel should be drawn with historical invasions that are familiar locally (Bogart, 1976; 72).

Although in Spain's case there is no parallel to be drawn, Communist expansionist ventures are made familiar to the Spanish Digest's reader. In "The Bridge at Andau" (May 1957)—a condensation from James Michener's book—excerpts describe how "In Hungary, Russian Communism showed the world its real character. With a ferocity and a barbarism never matched, it mercilessly destroyed a

helpless population." Something similar happens in "Home to Poland' (October 1958).

Max Eastman condensed the book "Protracted Conflict"—endorsed by Henry Kissinger—for the Digest and called the piece "World War III Has Already Begun" (April, 1961). In its first section, "The Communist Plan to Conquer the World," there is a global and somewhat apocalyptic view of the subject:

> That the American people are able or not to face the situation with the necessary decision and preparation will depend upon the recognition of the basic realities of today's world: this is in full revolution; the West and the Communist system fight to death to control this situation, and the fight won't come to an end but with total victory or defeat.

"Why the Dalai Lama Escaped to India" (September, 1959) and "Terror in Tibet"(February, 1961) describe the Chinese intervention in that country. In "Turkey, the Land Where Russia Ends" (August 1958) the Muslim country is held up as model of tenacious resistance to the advance of the red peril

> But Russians are convinced of the fact that, to take over Turkey, they would have to kill the colonels and the soldiers, the women and the children, one by one, and meanwhile suffer countless losses. That perspective has abruptly stopped tyranny in its path other times; and the fact can make the reader think (as I am sure it will make the reds think) how safe the free world would be if in NATO there would be 15 Turkeys instead of just one.

During the Cold War period, just as the Soviet Union had its "satellite states," the U.S. had its own: Guatemala, South Korea, South Africa, Indonesia, Chile, Turkey, El Salvador, etc. which "are not just military dictatorships, they are client states of the United States" (Parenti,1986:190-91). The Digest is supportive of these governments. As is the case with Spain, their relevance is framed by how much resistance they offer to the spread of Communism, not by the democratic advances of their own institutions. That is the treatment given to "Turkey, the Land Where Russia Ends," where a rigorous censorship, and a sunk economy are justified in Turkey's dictatorship in order to better defend its borders from Russia. "Syngman Rhee Biographical Sketch," which appeared in November, 1953, describes the situation of South Korea—a client state—and the personality of its president, Syngman Rhee. Korea's division turns out to be the result of the "forces of evil's"—China, Russia and North Korea—expansionism. A charismatic Christian—Rhee—educated in the United States, is represented as the bulwark against such forces south of parallel 38. The validity of the judgments made is assured, for the author of the article is a former U.S. ambassador to the U.S.S.R.

> *5. Communism menaces cherished institutions, values and loyalties. People who are relatively unaffected by Communism should begin to feel that if it did touch them, it would mean "the end of the things they are hoping for."* (Bogart, 1976: 72).

One of those institutions is religion; a pillar in the philosophy of the Reader's Digest is God (Schreiner, 1977; Dorfman, 1980, 1983; Baylon, 1988; Bainbridge, 1947). Communist oppression of peoples' religious beliefs is the obvious theme of "Red Campaign Against God in China" (November, 1952). "The Future is Ours, Comrade" (December, 1960)—a general review of the Russian society—indicates the presence of threats to some of the values defended by Wallace's magazine. One of these is its sexism, usually focused in stressing the role of the woman as a housewife and an object of beauty (Smith and Decker-Amos, 1985). The writer—dissident Novak— is surprised by the "lack of grace and coquetry of the Soviet woman." One of the students surveyed by Novak offers a somber picture of women in the Soviet Union:

> "You have to remember that women constitute 47 percent of our employees, putting aside those who work in farms. Therefore, coquetry and excessive femininity are characteristics of a past time. Only the Capitalist societies, degenerated and brutalized by all kinds of propaganda, still use sexual attraction to narcotize the masses."

Private property is another value emphatically cherished by the Digest. The TV set, the car and the house serve as symbols of achievement threatened by the Socialist system. In the same article, to illustrate the flaws of a planned economy, the author describes the difficulties an average family has to purchase a TV set. Some pages later, the possession of a car marks the distances between the people's acquisition of power and their leaders'. In "Eight Years Escaping From

the Russian Secret Police" (July, 1954) the wife of a dissident living in Canada explains: "Our house in Canada, relatively modest, would seem a palace in the Soviet Union."

> *6. Communism is alien. Counter the impression that Communist leaders and movements are indigenous nationalists* (Bogart, 1976:72).

In the Digest 1950s' issues of the sample the danger of Communist extension is in the form of the violence of invasions—Hungary, Korea, Tibet. During the 1960s, nationalist and liberation movements become Reader's Digest's preferred targets for its attacks on Communism.

In the second section of Max Eastman's "World War III Has Already Begun" (April 1961) "The Storm Troops and Their Combat Techniques," Eastman describes how money from Moscow is sent to "Latin American capitals to finance anti-American revolts or to gain control of important unions;" Chinese or Czech "technicians" transmit orders to African native professionals trained in the special schools organized for them "behind the Bamboo and Iron Curtains." The thesis maintains that Russia is winning World War III through propaganda and conspiracy, and that "propaganda is, by far, the most important Communist industry." More than 6,000 academies and universities spread over the "red empire" are dedicated to preparing students from "all the nations of the world" in the arts of espionage, propaganda,

political indoctrination, terrorism and all the variations of murder, including the administration of poison. Since the creation of the Soviet regime the authors estimate that more than 100,000 "agents" have been trained. Among them, Chinese President Liu Shao-chi and many of Mao Ze Dong's aides, Klement Gotwald from Czechoslovakia, Boleslaw Beirut from Poland, and Raul Castro from Cuba. Soviet citizens also attend these schools:

> These hordes of propagandists are dedicated above all to the task of spreading Communism among Krenkin's subjects; but an important number, those who with ease speak foreign languages or posses other useful abilities, travel abroad as diplomats, businessmen, technicians, secret agents or clandestine leaders of Communist movements.

As presented, this appears to be the only reason for people in different parts of the world to put trust in Communism. The article ends by suggesting that it is time for the United States and its allies to begin developing an efficient counter-offensive "before it is too late," meaning more military buildup and intelligence operations abroad.

In "Clouds Over Guantánamo" (February 1961) the military editor of *The New York Times* explains the value of the U.S. base, surrounded by the "bearded ones" of Castro's revolution:

> Imagine that the United States left Guantánamo and gave up the base to a Cuban government of Communist tendencies. Cuban armed forces lack the capacity and equipment to efficiently exploit them by their own. If it

> was put on the hands of another power or became, in a disguised way, a Soviet base, Guantánamo could be a cause of war.

"Report About Vietnam" (January 1962) shows how Communism comes across borders, it is never an indigenous movement:

> After the West left its position in Laos, most areas along the south Vietnamese border fell into hands of the Communist Pathet Lao [...] the precarious situation in Laos left other nations' borders unprotected before the Communist menace: Thailand and Cambodia.

"The Tragic Case of South Africa" (December 1960) looks at racial problems in that country. The Digest has never displayed any sensitivity toward racial issues (Bainbridge, 1947; Schreiner, 1977; Dorfman 1983) and it tries to present a "balanced" analysis of the problem, as if apartheid deserved to be defended. Communism, it says, is taking advantage of the hatred and antagonism between blacks and whites and gaining ground. In what has become the usual pattern, Communism's political position is not examined or evaluated. Nor is the social situation in which it is found. The Digest does not consider that Communism might offer some solutions to blacks, it is that

> Communists and their supporters have succeeded in infiltrating among the leaders of the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress. It is said that Communists are the intelligence of the movement.

Both U.S. defense policy and the Digest maintained that Soviet invasions justified U.S. military buildup and deployment of forces around the globe. The infiltration of Communist elements in developing countries and in those recently independent also offered advantages for U.S. expansionism. These justified counteraction operations by the C.I.A. and other intelligence organizations and the consequent promotion of American propaganda. A perceived Communist threat was also the perfect excuse to support rightist military regimes in those countries that would block the advance of progressive movements to the detriment of established U.S. policies. At the same time, it would protect the numerous U.S. economic and strategic interests in Central and South America, Africa and Asia.

Of the 378 articles that compose the 22 issues analyzed, 33 present anti-Communist themes; that is, 8.75 percent of the sample. In 26 of them—78 percent—anti-Communism was the central issue, being a secondary element in the rest. These findings represent a significant increase in the stress on Communism when compared with those of Baylon (1988) in his analysis of the U.S. edition of the Digest from 1945 to 1970. He found that 3.15 percent of the articles dealt with the topic. It is difficult to establish the conclusion that the Spanish edition carried more anti-Communism during the 1952-1962 decade, for Baylon does not divide his analysis in different periods of time

Smith and Decker-Amos (1985), on the other hand, analyzed three periods of the American edition of the magazine: 1940-41, 1960-61 and 1980-81. Six percent of articles were "preaching that Communists are menaces to world peace." In the period 1960-61 the figure rose to 10.7 percent. Equally, in the 1960-61 issues of our sample, out of 77 articles, 10—13 percent, 2.5 articles per issue—are dedicated to the matter that occupy us, a 4.25 percent above the average of the rest of the years. In Smith and Decker-Amos' study the average of anti-Communist articles for the 1940-41 period was 2.9 percent, and 6.0 for 1980-81. This seems to validate the assumption that the Digest increased its dose of anti-Communist diatribes as the Cold War tensions between the blocs escalated. It would be highly speculative however to draw more comparisons between the studies, as Smith and Decker-Amos did not include any issue from the rest of the Cold War years; the other two periods—1940-41, 1980-1981—are defined by a different historical framework.

Outlining the premises for discourse analysis, Teun Van Dijk (1991: 113) refers to themes or topics as the overall semantic unity of text, its conceptual summary, where the most important information is specified. Those topics are derived from operations intended to reduce the complexity of the information, such as selection and abstraction. Thus, the emphasis on specific topics may have ideological implications.

This is especially visible in the Reader's Digest. Without time or deadline constraints—due to its monthly periodicity and the "enduring nature" of its articles—and with a deliberated formula of selection and condensation, the recurrence of certain topics is not determined by other circumstance that its editors' choices, which are determined by Wallace's ideology. This essentially coincides—as the comparative analysis made in this work shows—with that of the U.S. official propagandistic institutions—the U.S.I.A. in this case.

Each one of the 33 articles analyzed here conveying the anti-Communist value contained several of the arguments suggested by the U.S.I.A. report. These are not the only topics the articles deal with, but the six categories comprise most of the Digest's basic anti-Communist discourse. This analysis applied to each article limited discussion to two of the categories described, as some of them are very general and overlap each other. In a more or less subtle way, all the articles included all of them. Only the most conspicuous ones were selected.

Not surprisingly, the most recurrent themes are about the aggressiveness and imperialistic ambitions of Chinese and, especially, Soviet Communism. It showed up in 17—51 percent—of the articles. This theme becomes the materialization of the scare promoted by the anti-Communist component of the Truman doctrine and the media; invasions, infiltrations, domino theories and maps with huge areas colored in red made the threat seem closer and the need for reaction urgent. Government and media were creating a climate in which the

public could feel the imminence of the red peril. This policy of fear produced results very soon. The National Opinion Research Center monitored opinion. In 1945, in response to the question whether the American public expected a new world war within the next 25 years, 32 percent said yes. The figure rose to 63 percent in 1947. By March, 1948, Gallup reported 73 percent (Aronson, 1973: 37).

Meanwhile, American military build-up and espionage actions were celebrated in the Digest as a means toward the preservation of world peace. That was the objective of the American spy plane in "The U-2 True Story" (December, 1960). According to the article, the origins of the aircraft were primarily defensive: The U.S. army needed to know the extent of Russian advances in aerospace technology, and needed a plane able to fly over "enemy territory" to carry it out. The story of the plane is told in laudatory terms: "If some day the whole story was told, there won't be enough medals to reward all the heroic pilots of the U-2." First in the list would be Francis Gary Powers, who had an "unfortunate accident" and crashed in Sverdlovsk in May 1960. "Fantasy Fulfilled: The B-70" (April, 1961) is an extension of the same theme; science in the service of military preparedness to preserve peace: "Next year, the most extraordinary plane ever built will ride the skies. It will contribute both to peace and the progress of commercial aviation." The tone is again laudatory, praising the capacity of corporations and military to work together. In his enthusiasm, the author goes as far as to predict that "at last it seems probable that, within

five years, the fastest and most fearsome plane in the world will be flying; maybe the last manned bomber in military history." "Underground Bases for Nuclear Missiles," (January, 1962) reflects the psychosis of a Soviet nuclear attack, almost as a premonition of the Cuban Missile Crisis, which would come eight months later. The article announced that "a fantastic chain of underground fortresses, the biggest engineering work in history, is being built in the U.S. for the defense of the free world."

The U.S.I.A. recommended stress on invasions and thus, East Germany, Korea, Tibet, Turkey, Thailand, the Arab countries, Poland, and Hungary appear in this study's sample as either occupied by Soviets of seriously threatened by a Communist invasion. They are discussed in ways that provide proof of Russia's militaristic approach to world peace. The treatment of this aspect of Communism is so similar in all cases as to show a formula: a small nation bordering a Communist state, that used to live in peace and prosper without apparent trouble, is invaded by a Communist power for no motive beyond its contiguous borders. From this moment the Red military initiates the process of assimilating the natives by whatever means necessary. These range from intense propaganda and indoctrination campaigns to the extermination of any opposition. Descriptions of tortures, massacres and miscellaneous violations of human rights by secret police or invading forces follow (invaders never appear to have any popular support).

Violent oppression is the second most repeated theme; 14 of the articles—42 percent—deal with it. In the last instance, annihilation of the human will is the goal of the Communist tyrants in their pursuit of total control, the "reducing all men to the level of animals" proclaimed by the U.S.I.A.; many of the stories seem inspired by Orwell's *1984*:

> If someone wanted to draw a map of the country of the MVD [Soviet Secret Police], he would put the capital in Khabarovsk, gray and somber city on the banks of Amur river, whose time is six hours ahead of Moscow and which is almost 48 hours by plane from the Soviet capital. Khabarovsk is the administrative center of the great empire within the Russian empire, the country of the slave prisoners and workers with forced residence spreads over more than 4,300 km to the West ("Russia, Closely and From Afar," March 1955)

Communist socialization as described in the pages of the Digest is a process of loss of individual rights and any form of private property. The Digest stresses the loss of rights when it coincides with the U.S.I.A. scheme to portray how Communism "menaces cherished institutions, values and loyalties." This is the case in 12 of the articles, 36 percent of the sample. "Possibilities for a World Peace" (December 1960) summarizes the threat: "It is not possible to reach a sincere world agreement with those who have declared their goal to destroy everything that is beloved to us."

Communism as alien to nationalistic movements is the fourth theme in frequency of occurrence. It appears in eight of the articles, 24

percent of the sample. Five of them—62 percent—appear in the 1960-1962 period, which begins with Castro's revolution—1959—and concludes as U.S. involvement in Vietnam was becoming evident.

The Digest adheres in this way to the trend found by media critics in the Cold War press: Liberation and independence movements in third world countries were systematically framed in terms of the struggle between Communism and the "free world." The aspirations for social justice and economic autonomy of these movements was ignored, as was the fact that these countries represent important economic interest for American capital, especially that of the transnational corporations (Acosta, 1979:146-147; Parenti: 1986: 173-185). Following this scheme, revolutionaries are depicted as mere puppets of Communist imperialism, and the U.S.-supported dictatorial regimes that they try to overthrow, as legitimate governments. Accordingly, the abuses committed by leftist revolutions and right wing regimes are given a blatant unbalanced treatment. While the former are given extraordinary relevance—as suggested by the U.S.I.A and explained above—the latter are ignored when not justified by the violence of the enemy, and human lives acquire different value, depending on their ideological alignment. There are "worthy" and "unworthy" victims (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: 36-86).

The cases of Cuba and Vietnam are the clearest examples of the propagandistic use of liberation movements by the U.S. press during the decade of the 1960s.

"Clouds over Guantánamo" (February 1961) deals with the situation in Cuba in general and the U.S. military base of Guantánamo in particular. To appropriately frame the events in the "free world" vs.Communism struggle discourse, history is ignored when not distorted. The base's existence is justified by the legality of the agreements between Cuba and the United States in 1902 and 1934, but with no mention to the semi-colonial—political and economic—status of the island with regard to the United States since 1898 to 1959 (Black, 1988: xi-xvii, 31, 57-60). The only depiction of Cuba's social reality is the lively atmosphere that used to surround Guantánamo before "the tidal wave of Castro's revolution shook the fences that encircle this piece U.S. territory." The author concludes the article with an approximation to the domino theory:

> [...] the political, psychological and military importance of Guantánamo bay becomes manifest. It is a link in the world power chain, and there is no chain stronger that the weakest of its links.

Cuba's strategic importance, just 90 miles from Florida's coasts, remained—and still remains, three decades later—as did the Digest's interest for the subject: "Over the decade 1971-1980 [it] had more articles on Castro's Cuba than it did on all 26 U.S. client states that were using torture on an administrative basis in early and mid-1970s" (Herman, 1982: 147). Moreover, in the 1945-1970 period, Cuba was the main

theme in 0.32 percent of *all* the articles published in the Digest U.S. edition (Baylon, 1980: 305).

"Report About Vietnam" (January 1962) excuses Ngo Dinh Diem—"a stocky and stubborn 60-year old"—for not being a convinced democrat, for he is a determined anti-Communist. Ho Chi Minh spreads propaganda from China, organizing a revolution for which the article gives no reasons. Decades of French colonialism are pictured as times of prosperity finally interrupted by extremist nationalism: "The country was divided in two in Geneva, as the French, exhausted and disappointed, agreed to giving the North up to the Communists."

Once again, the strategic relevance of a country on the wider stage of the Cold War strategy is emphasized in within the domino theory scheme:

> South Vietnam has always had U.S. support. Its government professes a militant anti-Communism and its army is ready to fight. If the U.S. cannot or does not want to save this country from the Communist assault, no Asian nation will trust them, and the fall of the whole of South Asia will be just a matter of time.

As early as 1956, the U.S. press had already started the anti-revolutionary discourse about Vietnam. A survey of several major newspapers that year showed that

> Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh were presented as merely agents of Moscow And Peking whose primary means of gaining support was through terror and force [...] while

> France was a 'gallant' ally... fighting alongside the U.S. to preserve liberty and justice (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: 187)

The Digest is more concerned with warning of the Communist threat than with spelling out why it implies such a great danger. The two plots suggested by the U.S.I.A. for that purpose—exposure of flaws in Communism and critiques to its ideological basis—rank last among the anti-Communist topics treated by the magazine. The display of the Communist system's malfunctions shows as a main theme in five of the articles analyzed, 15 percent of the sample.

Putting aside the article dealing with the flaws of Soviet public instruction, most of the attention is directed toward the economic problems of Socialist societies. Questions of social justice or health care—medicine is one of the magazine preferred topics—are not mentioned or they are subordinated to material economic achievement.

> Along with suppressing good news, the U.S. press exaggerates and even fabricates bad news about leftist countries, blaming their conditions of want on socialist "mismanagement" and Marxist "tampering" with what is misleadingly assumed to have been a previously healthy pre-revolutionary economy (Parenti, 1986: 197).

In "Home to Poland" (October, 1958) Christine Hotchkiss describes the misfortune of Polish peasants impoverished by land collectivization. They were happier before the war—they tell her—

when the rich land owners—the writer's parents— took care of them and the rest of the town's inhabitants and services.

The condensed book "The Future is Ours, Comrade" (December, 1960) outlined a somber picture of Soviet society "told by those who know it best: the very Russians themselves." No comparison was made with their living conditions under the Czars. The author, a "bureaucrat of lower rank in one of the satellite countries" travels around the Soviet Union interviewing a procession of characters who endure pitiful lives. The chapter "Flaws of the Planned Economy" explained that the Soviet industry was not able to design its own cameras or refrigerators because it dedicated all its efforts to nuclear research. Workers were "slaves of a system of competition and production quotas," needing a black market to have access to bare necessities such as a T.V. set.

Anecdotally, for the Digest even the Soviet espionage system—which was successfully conquering the world—was flawed. In "New Weapon for the Kremlin: Forgery" (January, 1959) some false documents passed by Communist spies—"trying to make the world believe that the U.S. wants to dominate the world's economy"—are detected, for they contain expressions not peculiar to American and British English. Thus, the messages change according to what image of the Soviet Union was presented:

> Certainly these images [Soviet military parades and lines for food] faithfully reflect the two basic and somewhat

> contradictory themes American political leaders and media have long been feeding the American public about the Soviet Union: It is a robust and dangerously powerful nation, but its productive capacity is falling apart. It has a sophisticated, highly advanced military-industrial formation, but its economy has failed (Parenti, 1986: 138).

The attacks on Communism's basic concepts and ideology and the critique of its intellectual validity were found in five of the articles—15 percent—although never as a primary issue. Rather than getting immersed in the deep waters of Marxism, Stalinism or other ideological disquisitions, the Digest focused—also as recommended by the U.S.I.A.—on ridiculing "its basic concepts, symbols and techniques." Simplism being one of the ingredients of Wallace's magic formula, the approach chosen to develop these arguments was the isolated fact, the anecdote of dubious credibility, the discrediting characterization and innuendo.

To a great extent, this was attained in the Digest through the style and rhetoric its editors utilized. The choices between different ways to say the same thing with a different syntactic structure have clear ideological implications (Van Dijk, 1991: 115-16). The most distinctive example is the use of "labels" or words ideologically loaded, intended to create in the reader's mind the desired biased image, usually without adding any informative value, just emphasizing peripheral aspects of the story and its actors (Parenti, 1986:221).

For a start, the discourse broadly framed a struggle in terms of "the free world" against Communism, "the enemy." Communist forces are described as the "red hordes," of the "red empire," and the methods of Communist expansion are consistently linked to terms like "secrecy," "clandestine," "indoctrination," "cajole" and "propaganda." The list of adjectives and loaded words is endless and covers any aspect of Communist actions and actors. The discrediting characterization of the latter, usually political leaders, is one of the most typical aspects of this method of framing the discourse. A good example is offered in "The Bearded One, Rude Lord of Red Germany" (September 1959). East German premier Walter Ulbricht fares no better than Khrushchev does in other articles. He is presented as "one of the most repulsive birds of prey incubated by Communism in Europe." The rest of the piece is not more flattering: a "cold master in the arts of simulation," "brutally arrogant," "servile and docile" and "totally lacking any feelings;" the bearded one "works 18 hours a day" "as a Moscow puppet."

Following the trend of superficiality and isolation of concepts, the "Remarkable Remarks," the fillers and jokes offer several examples of the condensed doses of thought submitted by the magazine to its readers. One remark in the January 1962 issue declares: "Poor fellow who believes in Communism: He believes in something that does not believe in him." A joke in December 1960 defines both the inefficiency of the Communist system and the servility of its press:

> A car race took place in Prague in which only two cars competed: an American Ford and a Russian Moscovich. The American vehicle won, with great advantage over the Russian. Prague's dailies informed: "The Moscovich finished second and the Ford finished next to the last..."

Under the title "Red Blasphemy," a filler in the February 1961 issue extracted from *The New York Times* attempts to address Communism's moral foundations:

> Observations from the Soviet premier, Khrushchev, visiting Rouen's cathedral:
>
> "We, Communists, have much in common with Jesus Christ, but I cannot agree with him in offering the right cheek if we are slapped on the left one. I believe in another principle: If I'm slapped on the left cheek, I respond with a blow to the right one, so hard as to break the other's head. That is the only difference between Christ and I."

The anti-Communist slant of the Reader's Digest Spanish edition is not a surprise. The fight against Communism had always been a priority in Wallace's editorial agenda. As he commented regarding the international editions of the Digest: "[...] more than other magazines it has exposed the evils of Communism and portrayed the blessings of the free economy system [...]" (Wood, 1967: 166). The fact that attracts attention is how close the content of the Digest follows the formula of the U.S.I.A. propaganda study revealed by Leo Bogart.

Since the beginning Wallace prided himself never having accepted financial support or editorial guidelines from the U.S. Government. However, since the opening of the Digest's Washington bureau in 1947, this became frequented by F.B.I. and C.I.A. agents, many of whom—beginning with J. Edgar Hoover—wrote for the magazine (Heidenry, 1993: 468-76). Looking at the Digest's anti-Communist articles and their blatant partisanship, the influence of the U.S. official intelligence and propaganda organizations becomes patent.

> [...] the Reader's Digest had at least the appearance of an institutional relationship with the C.I.A. and was involved in four areas of intelligence gathering: photography, which seemed to be an unnecessary adjunct to the magazine's art and editorial departments; editorial research for articles that were never printed; market research and polls; and special projects. (Heidenry, 1993: 472).

In addition to Hoover ("How the Spies From the Soviet Work"), among the authors "exposing the evil of Communism" in our sample there are: An U.S. ex-ambassador to the U.S.S.R. ("Syngman Rhee Biographical Sketch," November, 1953); a Russian ex-spy working at that time for the American intelligence ("Eight Years Escaping From the Russian Secret Police," July, 1954); a specialist in scientific and aviation issues collaborating with the U.S. Air Force and Lockheed Aircraft Corporation ("The U-2 True Story," December, 1960); the Institute of Foreign Policy Research of the University of Pennsylvania ("World

War III Has Already Begun," April, 1961); an East European dissident ("The Future is Ours, Comrade," December, 1960); and an ex-attaché to the U.S. embassy in Bonn ("The Ignominious Wall," February, 1962).

The study assigned by the U.S.I.A. to Wilbur Schramm and his team offered contradictory views regarding the convenience of using a blatant Communism-bashing approach—the Digest's style— or a more positive, pro-democracy, pro-American attitude (Bogart, 1976: 72-77). There was, however, an acceptance of the former when the propaganda was to be spread in "friendly countries" and those which were not "experiencing Communist oppression." Both were the case in Spain at that time. The signature of the Pact of Madrid confirmed the first aspect, and the exile, imprisonment and/or execution of leftist opposition members assured the second one. The Digest gave Franco's authoritarian regime ideological support in its attempt to dismiss political deviation through the "demonization" of the opposition. As it was the case in the U.S. with "un-American activities," the slightest sign of dissent, the smallest push toward democratic principles, was automatically branded in Spain as "Communist subversion."

CHAPTER 5

The Pro-Capitalist Value

Together with "exposing the evils of Communism," Wallace believed that the international editions of his magazine spread around the globe "the blessings of free enterprise" (Wood, 1967: 166). Unlike the deliberately structures anti-Communist messages described in the previous chapter, pro-Capitalist content was merely a reflection of traditional U.S. media value messages. Like any media, U.S. communication products reflected the values of the system within which they operate. As Gans study shows, pro-private enterprise, independent business values, appear routinely in news media content. However, in the case of the Reader's Digest in Spain, both "hard" anti-Communist propaganda and "softer" socialization messages were intimately linked. Together with, and often rather than democracy, Capitalism performed the political counterpart to Communism. In the Spanish case, the Pact of Madrid subordinated the American aid to Spain to the gradual adoption of a free market economy, while no pressure was exerted toward the democratization of Franco's dictatorship. Moreover, as shown in the cases of Turkey, Korea and Vietnam, democratization was not the main goal of the U.S. helping those "client regimes."

This value, however, was and is not exclusive for exportation. Gans found in his study that "Responsible Capitalism" pervades U.S. newsrooms. He defines the Capitalist discourse in the news:

> The underlying posture of the economy resembles that taken toward the polity: an optimistic faith that in the good society, businessmen and women will compete with each other in order to create increased prosperity for all, but that they will refrain from unreasonable profits and gross exploitation of workers and customers (Gans, 1979: 46).

In this frame, economic growth is always seen as a positive sign and assumed to be of universal benefit to the nation. Government intervention becomes a hindrance in the normal development of business, adding only bureaucracy and the consequent red tape to the initiative of private businessmen and women. Innovative entrepreneurs and able corporate executives are endorsed and set as examples of success role models to imitate. The necessity of some kind of welfare—for those who cannot succeed within the system—is admitted, but not as part of a minimal standard of living goal or as an aspect of economic justice. Those on welfare are perceived as failures. Thus welfare has internal negative reinforcement.

The "welfare states" of the Social Democratic European countries are perceived as threats, for they mean higher taxes and public control over investment, to the detriment of private initiative. The independent businessman is considered by capitalists to always be the

better route to services to the consumer. This is defined as good citizenship (Gans, 1979: 46-48).

The natural tendencies of Capitalism—unemployment, monopoly— are highlighted as undesirable circumstances, but never as a direct consequence of the way the system works. Big corporations are considered basic pillars of the economy, providers of jobs and wealth, and therefore patriotic benefactors of society to be protected by the government. Besides this benevolent consideration by media professionals, corporations spend huge amounts of money in public relations and advertising campaigns promoting their role and the system where they thrive, praising the benefits of big business and warning about the dangers of big government (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: 21-22). The fact that their growth, especially in this period of time, was due to a great extent to their alliance with the war industry, is used as proof of the patriotic convergence of goals between State, capital and the military apparatus: "Capitalism and Americanism are joined in something called 'the American System'" (Parenti, 1986: 67).

The U.S.I.A. study shared Wallace's interest for propagating the blessings of Capitalism and Free Enterprise, and recognized the ideological and pragmatical aspects of defending the U.S. economic system:

> U.S.I.A. should describe how the American free enterprise economy operates. This may be carried further: U.S.I.A. should promote Capitalism in a form acceptable to the rest of the world. The concept that the U.S.I.A.'s purpose is to

> "advertise America" may be expressed literally. If foreign peoples recognize that there is a high level of culture in America, it will change their notion that they must go to Europe for home furnishing and equipment, and this will result in more sales of American goods (Bogart, 1976: 23)

Thus, promoting Capitalism had a multiple function: It offered an alternative to the Communist system an alternative that really worked. At the same time, it helped keep a balance between negative and positive propaganda strategy: Not all the messages had to be of a negative, anti-Communist nature; according to the social scientists who researched for U.S.I.A., an excess of the latter could have on the audience an effect opposite to the desired one (Bogart, 1976: 73). Finally, and most important, positive pro-Capitalist messages were meant to be a central point in U.S. Cold War strategy—Truman doctrine and Marshall Plan: The opening of new markets for a post-war economy in expansion. The threat of Communism would feed the need for the military industry, while the universal acceptance of Capitalism/Free Enterprise—free trade, free market, free flow of information—would push for the introduction in the new markets of U.S. consumer and capital goods (Ewen, 1976: 191; Vázquez Montalbán, 1974: 48-49).

The U.S.I.A. report includes, in addition to " The Fight Against Communism," a "Projecting America" section suggesting positive themes of "Americana" propaganda, this is, how to provide foreign audiences with an attractive picture of American life. The study proposes eight main themes, from "Americans are nice people"—No.

1—to "America is a Peaceable Country"—No. 8. Number seven refers to the promotion of the economic system:

> The U.S. economy is successful. America's material well-being rests on its freedom. American Capitalism is unique, but is often confused with the European kind "that is cartel-like or feudalistic." Since people overseas do not understand how the American economy works, often thinking of the Marxist concept of Capitalism, U.S.I.A. must emphasize that the U.S. actually has a "mixed economy" that provides the ordinary consumer with a high income. It has changed since the heyday of American industrial expansion and the "robber barons" (Bogart, 1976:90).

These suggestions for propaganda themes coincide essentially with what Gans found to be the basis of pro-Capitalist discourse of American mainstream media. Given this convergence, and considering Wallace's proximity to U.S.I.A. purposes and mainstream America's discourse, the themes mentioned above are expected to be found in the pages of the Reader's Digest Spanish edition. These variables will indicate the presence of the Responsible Capitalism / Free Enterprise value in this analysis.

1. *Celebration of Successful Businessmen and Innovators.*

In the competitive and individualistic scheme of the free enterprise system, innovative minds, ready to take risks and able to effective management, are considered a primary element in the success

of the country's economy and thus its society. They are the ideal of personal fulfillment and provide role models to follow (Gans, 1979: 46).

In "How the New German Generation Thinks" (November 1952), condensed from *Life*, a German journalist describes the realities of a country that begins to revive form the ashes of World War II and Nazism. As usual, the perspectives are highly optimistic, both in the political and economical aspects. In the latter, the author comments about the "German miracle" under the Marshall Plan and concludes that: "From this complex picture a clear fact emerges: Post-war Germany belongs to businessmen; by them she is ruled, and to their ambitions she is tied."

In the same issue—November 1952—the condensed book is dedicated to the figure of Henry Ford, clearly one of Wallace's greatest heroes, who enjoyed along the years many pages of praise in the Digest (Bainbridge, 1947: 172-75). "The Man who Thought With His Hands" is a condensation of "The Wild Wheel," a biography of Ford's founder. Ford is described as a humanistic, smart innovative individual, father of the model T, mass production and many other industrial novelties that contributed to raising the workers' standards of living and putting the car within the reach of everyone. But, above all,

> Henry Ford was the man that in a most decided way practiced the free enterprise, creed and system entirely developed in the American milieu. It was founded in the doctrine that every businessman that, freely, took care of the production of goods for the others, would contribute to the general welfare, even if it was not his intention.

These articles did not describe working conditions on the assembly line or provide more depth than the typical public relations profile. "Henry Ford and the Magic of Soy" (February 1962) is the second article of the sample about "the king of the automobile industry." It explains how Ford had been, once more, a prophet of modern enterprise. This time it acknowledges his being a forerunner in the development of agricultural chemistry, "for which he did not receive the recognition he deserved."

"Mexico on the Move" (November, 1953) describes the progress of a country that in the 1930s was bending toward Communism, a system "nurtured by poverty and the exploitation of the masses." In the 1950s, the "magnificent story of progress and prosperity south of Rio Bravo" is written by "the new Mexican middle class, which has reached its adulthood," and within it, "businessmen and professionals" who are demonstrating how "in a free-enterprise environment, the main resources of a little developed country are located in the peoples' unexploited faculties."

Although more than 50 percent of its population was unemployed at the time and a higher number was illiterate, Mexico's prosperity is shown through the personal success story and achievements of Antonio L. Rodríguez, a 50-year old *empresario* from Monterrey. Proving that the American Dream does not have to be exclusively a U.S. phenomenon, Rodríguez started from scratch—thus mirroring the U.S. Horacio Alger mythology. Learning English and

working in New York were his first steps. With hard work, imagination and will power Rodríguez had created "a financial institution with 14 subsidiaries which cover half of Mexico, a large insurance company and a modern typographic business." Like any great American businessman, Rodríguez had augmented his career with countless altruistic social works.

Similar personages with parallel accomplishments are found in "Capitalists Who Prosper in Russia" (June, 1954), "Germany, the Most Prosperous Country in the World" (August, 1958) and "Liberia Transforms Itself" (April, 1961). These enterprising men featured basically replace the government's role of welfare subsidy with free-enterprise wage earning, what for Wallace was a key in the success of the system.

2. *Promotion of Free Enterprise and Private Initiative. Criticism of Government Intervention in Economic Affairs.*

For the Reader's Digest the intervention of the government in the economy brings images of high taxes and state bureaucracy. It moves any system one step closer toward the establishment of a socialist system in an economy which otherwise would work by and for free enterprise and private initiative.

Reo M. Christenson analyzed the content of the U.S. edition of the magazine from 1944 to 1964 to explore charges made in 1944 by *Commonwealth* that "the millions of people who depend largely on the

Digest are in danger of intellectual malnourishment and ideological deficiency diseases." Christenson examined the Digest's political and economic themes. He confirmed the presence of certain repetitive, familiar motifs in the pages of the magazine:

> A dominant editorial theme of the Digest is that federal officials are congenitally extravagant, that deficit spending and the national debt threaten disaster, that federal taxes are an insupportable burden, that the federal bureaucracy bungles and botches as it bloats, and that federal power is a menace to the liberties of any American, great and small (Christenson, 1965: 30).

In addition to much filler material, Christenson found 300 articles dealing with such themes. He concluded that the zeal that the Digest put into its diatribes, with its numerous methods of misrepresentation of reality, "cast doubt on the professional competence or scrupulousness of the editors." He analyzed in depth the article "The Real Truth About the Federal Budget," which appeared in an U.S. Digest issue from 1963. To check the validity of the assertions made in the article, he looked at the rebuttal of its content made by the Bureau of the Budget. This agency found the piece to be

> "essentially a compilation of half-truths which together sum up a very misleading view of the federal financial situation. An extravagant use is made in the article of color words, and many things are left unsaid which would not serve the writer's purpose" (Christenson, 1965: 31).

Colorful expressions, weak arguments and slanting and a weighted selection of facts are also common in the pages of the Spanish Digest when it defends free enterprise against government. In "France in Crisis" (July, 1954) a distinguished French economist analyzes the social and economic situation of his country, which appears to be precarious. Political instability and the war in Indochina are described as minor problems for the old empire. The real crisis, the article asserts, is moral: "It has developed that too many French people are in the habit of living under the government's protection." As suggested in "Mexico Moves On," the government allows private initiative to develop and then lose the fear that keeps them from making the country prosperous. The inconvenience of government interventionism is pointed to in the French case in the form of high trade duties, restrictive quotas, high productivity costs—and consequent prices—high and unjust taxes, devaluation of the currency, inflation, loss of saving habits, high rents, and poor productivity on the farms. The seven-page article is full of political and economic arguments, always supported by the corresponding data. But, as the Bureau of the Budget suggested, there is more color and innuendo than reality and facts. The author condenses his arguments defining the foundations of French and, by extension, European economic systems:

> The French people forge the illusion that they enjoy a free economy. What they really have, instead of the traditional free competition market, is competition by subsidies, supported by countless groups, each one of them urging

> the State to be protective artificially in their respective positions.

In "Germany, the Most Prosperous Country in the World" (August, 1958), another piece about the economic miracle, the reader is provided some explanation. Together with the Marshall plan and the industriousness of the German people, "free market is the revolutionary' formula in a Europe populated by "so many official monopolies and cartels." The German Secretary of Economy declares that free market "recognizes the ethical values of life," and the author of the article concludes: "It means that the three fundamental economic forces—labor, capital and consumers— must exercise autonomously their own production control, for the benefit of the general economic welfare."

The final passages of "The Man who Thought With His Hands" praise the entrepreneurial times of Henry Ford, the "individualistic world of the complete free enterprise." It suggests that, in the current times of regulations, Ford could not have bolstered the automobile industry:

> Complete free enterprise did not survive Ford. The mob stoned it to death, and buried it with hymns of praise to a more restful life. The funeral rites where made by the Government, which took, over the supreme responsibility of the national economy; the official tax collector who becomes insatiable, and organized labor, whose economic power against the employers was deliberately increased by law, based on reasons of social policy.

Following its norm, the Digest simplifies arguments to the extreme; the condensation of "The Man who Thought With his Hands" concludes: "If free enterprise had not created the richest world that ever existed, the new State, which intends to increase directly the people's well-being, would have much less to distribute."

3. *Comparison Between American Capitalism and the European Experience.*

Gans points out an American mainstream media priority in warning the audience of the threat represented by the "welfare state" of European countries by covering extensively its failures and virtually ignoring its successes (Gans, 1979: 47). Here again media routine coincides with the U.S.I.A. report, which recommended that media make clear the difference between American Capitalism and the "feudalistic, cartel-like" European one (Bogart, 1976: 90).

The Digest, obsessed with curbing Government intervention in the economic and social process, stressed anti-government themes in its defense of the American system. Government intervention seemed for the Digest to be always too close to the European paradigm and far from the *laissez faire* ideal state. As examples, the new German free enterprise was described as thriving despite Europe's multitude of "official monopolies and cartels," while France's economic weaknesses were attributed primarily to the protectionist role played by the French government.

"New Concept of Capitalism" (September, 1956) corrects, one by one, "the most common errors believed by those who do not know about the United States' social and economic organization." One mistake is to think of the United States as a plutocracy which controls most of the wealth in a monopolized country. The author dismisses the accusations with the irrefutable proof of statistics: There were fewer large fortunes in 1955 than 50 years earlier; the ratio between the incomes of a peasant and a Chief Executive Officer were one-to-four while in Russia it was one-to-12, and so on. The data is followed by the simplification of arguments:

> Most of the wrong ideas about the U.S. [...] come from the fundamental mistake of believing that the American and European Capitalism are the same thing [...] The vast majority of the people who worry about public affairs in most nations is against Capitalism... because European Capitalism *is* reactionary.

The author links concern about social issues with the negative concept of "reactionary" political behavior. The accusation that the American system lacks of planning is based, according to him, on the "European cult for collectivism." All the planning is carefully carried out by the captains of private enterprise, for "North Americans know very well that a strict planning by the State paralyzes the economic initiative." However, the citizen is not left alone in the wilderness, and "the conflicts between producer and consumer are trivial, for it is recognized that the consumer and the worker are the same person."

4. *Defense of American Democratic Capitalism as Fair.*

U.S.I.A.'s report warned that, in exporting American Capitalism, it would have to fight against the "Marxist concept" of the system as unfair. The agency foresaw that, in Western Europe especially, there would be reticence toward accepting a system based on the exploitation of labor (Bogart, 1976: 90). The goal was then to show the world that the United States possessed a "'mixed economy that provides the ordinary consumer with a high income," and where businessmen and women, as Gans pointed out in his description of "Responsible Capitalism," "will compete with each other in order to create increased prosperity for all, but [where] they will refrain from unreasonable profits and gross exploitation of workers or customers." In U.S.I.A.'s words, the U.S. system is today far from the "heyday of American industrial expansion and the 'robber barons'"(Bogart, 1976: 90).

"The Man Who Thought With His Hands" acknowledges that the times that saw Henry Ford succeed were not perfect. There was a price to be paid for progress. Reflecting the Social Darwinism of the era, which accepts survival of the fittest, the article concluded: "It was a cruel system, as cruel as nature, for the weak and the unable; but it *worked* efficiently and produced the most amazing material developments in the history of humankind."

However, for people to think that in the 1950s the nation operates on those terms of cruelty is another of common erroneous beliefs allegedly held about the United States and clarified in "New

Concept of Capitalism." The article maintains that "the North American system has radically changed since 1929." Apart from being assured that there won't be another great crisis like the Depression,

> important legislative measures guarantee, more than in any other country, the highest degree of economic protection for people in all the categories [...] the feeling of insecurity has disappeared completely.

The burden of making the system a fair one bears most heavily on the employers, who ultimately—according to the Digest's content—are the only collective that should take care of the workers' welfare. "To Improve Labor Relations" (December 1952) compares the factory job with marriage, and the relations between owner and worker with those between husband and wife. The comparison is used to illustrate the "reciprocal communication system" put in practice by thirty U.S. companies with great success. Based on a claimed natural employer-employee trust, periodical meetings between the parties lead to a better understanding of each other's needs, an increase of the workers' productivity and a consequent and just social and material benefits for labor. This basically eliminates the need for unions, as employers respond generously to the flexibility of worker's petitions. Faithful to its editorial methods, the Digest selects the example that best fits its point of view: A company in Stamford, Conn, "famous for having applied the system perfectly."

Similar arguments propose "Sharing Progress for Peace in the Industry" (November 1952). The article elaborates about the system adopted by General Motors to negotiate workers' salaries. It consists of increasing, or reducing, the workers' allowances according to the fluctuations of prices and national productivity. The article claims the system to be fair for workers, who accept their dependence on macro-economic indicators, but nothing is said about the benefits for executives and share holders. Nor about the impact on personal budgets of those at the low earning curve. The only source in the article is the author of the piece, General Motors' president Charles E. Wilson. Naturally, he writes from a self-interested perspective.

Six years later, "A Salaries Plan Against Inflation" (August, 1958) tackles the same problem but in tougher terms. It accuses unions for demanding "every time more salary for less work. These demands were out of date before 1950, and are currently untenable." The article puts all the blame for inflation—a media obsession (Gans 1979: 45)—on unions and workers who aspire to earn more than the productivity of the country can afford and

> riffle all those who live from a fixed salary [...] the millions of citizens who don't enjoy the privilege of having automatically covered every increase in the cost of life produced by the increase in salaries.

Mention of unemployment in the the U.S. economic system appears isolated as an occasional unfortunate happenstance: "inevitably,

some industries will always fall behind." In "Is the U.S. Facing an Economic Crisis?" (July, 1954) the author, a professor from Columbia Business School, warns that "unemployment will be used by the pessimists to 'prove' that the United States is at the edge of another disaster." He adds a positive twist to Government intervention in the economic scene: "The current government is determined to do whatever is possible to keep in balance business activity." It alludes to unemployment benefits, social security, retirement benefits and other elemental services provided by Washington, acknowledging State participation in order to reaffirm the humanity of the system.

5. *Optimism for a System That Works and has to be Exported*

Optimism and faith in the Capitalist system pervades all the Digest articles about economics. There are, however, some articles that specifically try to project a positive and hopeful perspective for free enterprise. The decades of the 1950s and 1960s were years of economic progress and optimism, and the Digest tried to make the reader feel that it was not a temporary stage.

That is the case in "A New Economic Policy is Needed" (October 1956). It announces the exhaustion of the "current system of programs of American economic aid abroad" such as the Marshall Plan. The world's economy does not depend on the United States any more, and it is time to "admit the economic interdependence of the countries foreign to the Soviet orbit." The author points out how the United

States, with only 6% of the world's population, consumes 50% of its raw materials. The main preoccupation that this impressive statistic produces is that of meeting demand: "the United States most compelling need is to get the supply of such materials in the precise amount to keep its industrial structure moving." Once this is obtained, the author says, the United States will promote the quick industrialization of Africa, Asia and Latin America, so there will be a market of buyers as well as of suppliers. Investments of U.S. capital and the creation of "multiplier effect industries" such as the department stores like Sears Roebuck in those countries will contribute to create wealth. This promotion of economic colonialism is softened by the inclusion of some individual native initiative:

> The most important condition for an accelerated industrial development is to count on entrepreneurs, managers, sellers, bankers, engineers and technicians; people who receive the new with enthusiasm and give themselves to the task of developing their countries economically.

This is what the Europeans did not do during their centuries of colonial domination. Indonesians criticize this European experience as "Western Economic Imperialism," according to the article. It forecasts that within 10 to 20 years, with the necessary cooperation and solidarity between nations, the global economic development can be accomplished.

"1960-1970: Era of Abundance for the Free World" (July 1960) offers numerous statistical data to back its optimistic assertions: "In Western Europe three houses were built for every two in the U.S [...] France had the satisfaction of paying $212 million to the International Monetary Found [...] The standard of living of the English people will double in 25 years [...] Japan could invest 360 billion yens abroad [...]." Such examples support a thesis that "At the beginning of the decade from 1960 to 1970, the most impressive news in the economic sector is that, at last, many nations around the world enjoy an 'economy of abundance.'"

The origin of this new era comes from the "unselfish" aid that the United States had been extending to Europe in order to secure new markets for U.S. goods as well as to help devastated nations recover from the war. With this, many Western countries—and Japan—had fully developed. This was going to trigger progress in the rest of the world including a European Cooperative Market for "in many places it is being enthusiastically adopted as a new concept of capitalism, according to which benefits must be shared equitably." The article, condensed from *Time*, is a review of the economic boom in the now recovered countries. It acknowledges, nevertheless, that these advances "have highlighted the magnitude of the needs of certain areas in the world." But there is room for hope there too, as far as the right choices are made: "In Asia problems are equally grave. But, after several years of indecision, India has at last opened her arms to private capital [...]."

Thus, the economic miracle is possible even in a country where "there has never been a horse, an ox, and the plough is almost unknown. Just one generation ago, 99 percent of the people lived the primitive existence of tribes." That is how "Liberia Transforms Itself" (April, 1961) describes the country before "development," which has led the country to have 5,000 cars and trucks, a foreign trade of $86 million, and where the natives "are learning to read with pleasure and hospitals are replacing witch doctors."

The "secret behind the fabulous progress of this country" is provided by its president, William Tubman: "All this has been obtained thanks to the private initiative. Liberia is a living proof of how developing countries can obtain successes that otherwise would be inconceivable." In 1926, Harvey Firestone decided that Liberia was a good place to grow trees that produce the raw material needed to manufacture tires and invested in the country. He

> sent his recruiters to the edges of the woods with an absolutely new offer: fixed salaries—the highest paid so far in the country—rice below production cost, instruction, and free housing and medical care. In response to this offer, the men from the tribes laid their lances down and left the jungle by the thousands."

Firestone was followed by Goodrich and many other foreign corporations who responded to Liberia's progressive president's invitation. The article enumerates the multiple benefits these companies provided the Liberians, both in the economic and social

spheres. However, nothing is said about working conditions, company profits or exported capital.

"New Concept of Capitalism" concludes: "U.S. democratic Capitalism is something similar to what Lincoln Steffens once said— erroneously— about Communism: 'I have been in the future, and it works.'"

6. *Consumerism and Advertising*

The role of advertising as one of the filters that determine what kind of messages the media carry has been already described. This section analyzes the value of consumerism and advertising as its most visible promoter, which confers on it the ideological component mentioned in chapter three.

The origins of consumerism coincides with that of the mass production, in the 1920s, when the capitalist system had the peremptory need to distribute the goods produced in industrial amounts. The employer began to "consumerize" workers with higher salaries and fewer hours, so they were able to participate in the benefits of the system through the capacity to constantly purchase a greater variety of goods and services (Ewen, 1976: 26-28). With the excuse of displaying alternatives available and helping the consumer make the right choices, advertising became the main instrument in the promotion of a consumer culture.

The consumerism that advertising promotes presents several dependent facets. Of them, keeping the production system moving is the most obvious. It has the effect of alienating the individual in many forms, from standardizing tastes to creating all kinds of artificial needs. But the most decisive aspect of consumerism in modern societies is the fact that it has become a dominant ideology for the masses. It directs peoples' attention toward accumulating the greatest possible amount of material goods and thus concentrates on the most superficial aspects of social change. Consequently it creates a mass of passive individuals unable to challenge the status quo. (Acosta, 1979: 144-46; Ewen, 1976: 85; Parenti, 1986: 62-66; Schiller, 1982: 157-61).

Sociologist Stuart Ewen summarizes this reasoning when he describes the origins of the phenomenon:

> Consumerism was a world view. A "philosophy of life." But it was not a world view which functioned purely in the economic realm—selling goods. While it served to stimulate consumption among those who had the wherewithal and desire to consume, it also tried to provide a conception of the good life for those who did not; aimed at those who were despairing of the possibility of well being in their immediate industrial environment (Ewen, 1976: 108-09).

The latter was the case in Spain when the Reader's Digest was introduced. The country was recovering from the war and the disastrous decade of the 1940s, in which international isolation and erroneous economic policies had pushed Spanish economic indicators

to the level of those of the previous century. By the year the Digest began to publish Spain's edition, 1952, the Spanish national income was still slightly below the 1935 level (Tamames, 1973: 417). Thus, the American images of "the good life" carried by the magazine in the form of stories and advertising were not realistic displays of purchasing choices for the average Spaniard. Rather, they were symbols of modernity, of the consumption paradise for which to aspire, laid out for the Spanish people, provided a free enterprise system was fully applied.

U.S.I.A. recognized the philosophical value of material well being when promoting America abroad. Chapter three described how the agency appreciated the role of magazines such as the Reader's Digest because if they did nothing else than showing ads, they were showing the American standard of living and "how people [got] on there" (Bogart, 1976: 93).

In addition to showing the ads, the Digest promoted the notion of consumerism and material possession as symptoms of modernity and social welfare, always closely linked to the adoption of the free enterprise economic system. This philosophy is perfectly defined in the paradigmatic "The Man Who Thought With His Hands." The article defends Henry Ford from the accusations of having made individuals slaves of the machine by the introduction of mass production:

> If the machine enslaved him [the worker] for eight hours, it also allowed him to come back home earlier, be the proprietor of a house that no unskilled worker had been able to own before, and buy his own automobile. The

> machinery, despite its rigorous demands, multiplied the wealth and the leisure time and increased in a prodigious manner the commodities and pleasures of the daily life.

"Capitalists Who Prosper in Russia" (June 1954) shows capitalism as a natural system, which flourishes in the most adverse of the situations. The article justifies the black market and its new entrepreneurs who are getting rich in the Soviet Union, for "the enormous scarcity of consumer goods has aroused the natural incentive in thousands of heads with commercial ideas."

"How the new German Generation Thinks" defines German prosperity in the following terms:

> In lower Hamburg there is such activity that parking is becoming a problem [...] Restaurants are full of people and show windows overflow merchandise. Full movie theaters would provoke the envy of American proprietors.

Abundance is understood as a one of the brightest signs of progress. That is an important component in "1960-1970: Era of Abundance for the Free World." An optimistic view of the future is reinforced by the fact that "the U.S. concept of mass production, more sales volume [...] is expanding all over Europe." The "American policy of high salaries" is also helping "transform the proletariat into a middle class more numerous every day, determined to conquer all the advantages of wealth." The author illustrates these achievements with the example of an IBM factory in Europe; in little more than two years

it had to redesign its parking lot to accommodate the motorcycle in place of the bicycle, and later to the replacement of this by the car.

On the other hand, U.S.I.A. was aware of the negative image that exhibitions of consumerism could provide about a materialistic society . Point five of its recommendations for "Projecting America" addressed the need to build respect for the spiritual qualities of the American life. The goal was "to overcome the foreign stereotype of U.S. society as completely dominated by materialism and self interest" (Bogart, 1976: 90).

"Where is the U.S. 'Decadence'?" (February 1961) explored this issue. The article's rubric claims that "instead of the disoriented and decadent country that some people imagine, an English journalist finds a serene nation, full of confidence in itself, which lives its ideals." To get the feeling of the country, the author traveled around the States talking to cab drivers and fellow train and bus travelers. One of these individuals, described by the author as a representative of the "low middle class," invites the Englishman to spend the night in his "little suburban house" and the day after to ride the "little yacht" bought with his savings:

> There was nothing "materialistic" in the enjoyment and spiritual freedom, the elevation of the soul that the ride provided the family. As a result of their prosperity, they—and millions like them—are discovering new horizons of life.

The author suggests that the stereotypes that Europeans have of the U.S. come, to a great extent, from the Americans' excessive self-criticism. Therefore he concludes: "If North America is the most materialistic society in history, it is also the society where materialism is most rigorously and persistently denounced."

Both through such comments and through its advertisement pages, the Spanish Digest very well served the conspicuous consumption cause. The U.S. edition of the magazine did not accept advertising until 1955, when its expenses could no longer be covered anymore without a considerable increase of the subscription rates (Garberson, 1972: 4-6). Foreign editions, on the other hand, carried advertisements from the beginning to guarantee the magazine's financial viability. As seen in chapter three, in the case of the Latin American edition it helped the magazine obtain official support.

The Spanish edition was no exception: It always accepted advertising. From eleven advertising pages in the November, 1952 issue—8.46 percent of the space— the Digest reached in our total sample a maximum of 135 advertising pages—46.23 percent—in the December, 1960 issue. Of the average of 170.81 pages that every issue carried, 56.68 or one-third, were dedicated to advertising. This is not a high percentage, compared to the information industry's standards, which in print media normally passes 50 percent. But the relevance of the

advertisements in the Spanish Digest rests not in their quantity, but in their quality and impact— what they meant to the Spanish reader:

> Advertising has become an accomplice of the "consumerism psychosis" essential in the falsification of the popular subjective conditions [...] advertising has created a participation spirit, generated by enchantment [...] this optical illusion has in advertising its principal and most recent ally, precisely under the influence of the North American advertising culture over the Spanish managers (Vázquez Montalbán, 1974: 409).

This consequence of creating an illusion was specially true in the 1952-1962 period; it was not until the very end of the 1950s that the Spanish society counted on a middle class minimally ready to participate in the mass consumption process (Tamames, 1973: 466-71). In fact, the massive penetration of U.S. products and advertising agencies did not begin to flourish in Spain until around 1964 (Vázquez Montalbán, 1974: 409). Before that, the Digest could be said to be an agent of pre-socialization by introducing American consumer goods and brands and a new concept in advertising—that from Madison Avenue—to its Spanish audience.

Many of the products advertised in the Digest—like international travel—were clearly far from the reach of the nascent Spanish middle class. T.W.A. advertises in five issues of the sample, from 1952 to 1954, offering a stopover in New York on the traveler's route to South America, enjoying the comfort of the "sleeper-seats" in their

Constellation airliners. Likewise, Pan Am appears in 12 of the issues sampled, offering connections to Latin America and the Far East in its flights from Barcelona and Lisbon. Other airlines advertise, offering practically all the possible destinations in the world: Avianca, Air France, B.O.A.C., B.E.A., Canadian Pacific Airlines and Lufthansa. In addition to this, Convair, McDonnell Douglas and Boeing kept the readers aware of the last innovations of the aviation industry in one, seven and three issues respectively.

The automobile and its industry, as paradigms of status, mass production and consumption, also had their share of space in the Digest. The Ford Company pioneered in Spain selling its products in 1928. By that year, the Madison Avenue firm J. Walter Thompson was taking care of Ford's advertising business in the nation (Vázquez Montalbán, 1974: 414). In the 1960-62 issues of our sample, the Ford corporation presents its new Ford Taunus 17M as "the elegant way to be practical," and the Ford Consul 315, "an invitation to a sensational change." Other U.S. automobile related industries that advertised were Firestone, Champion and Pirelli.

The symbolic role that this kind of advertisements had in the audience of a mass circulation magazine like the Digest is better understood when taken into account with the purchasing power of the Spaniards: In 1960 there were four cars, one television set, four refrigerators and 12 telephones for every 100 households (Vázquez Montalbán, 1974: 412). Ewen's analysis of the advertising culture's

emergence in the United States in the1920s may be applied to the circumstances of the Digest's first ten years in Spain: "Only in the instance of an individual ad was consumption a question of *what to buy*. In the broader context of a burgeoning commercial culture, the foremost political imperative was what to dream" (Ewen, 1976: 109).

The most advanced American concept of advertising is detectable in the sharp contrast between the advertisements of Spanish and U.S. products. As is the case in many third world or lesser developed nations, the Spanish ones tend to be modest in their means—usually black and white—and their proportions, as they limit themselves to showing the utility, quality or appearance of the product with little originality. U.S. advertisers clearly pay more attention to color and design in general and, especially, to "the dream." There is the intention of linking the possession of the product to promises of personal and social fulfillments beyond the pure material use of the item. Westinghouse announces its "Super-54" refrigerator as "The refrigerator of success, whose appeal provokes that emotion and wish to enjoy a greater comfort." Williams claims in an ad that "women admire the man who uses Aqua Velva, whose distinguished scent and vigorous sensation you will also admire;" pictured are a group of women who look, apparently with desire, at a good-looking man. Winston chooses to show a group of men and women elegantly dressed chatting at a fancy party; the pitch: "The good taste cigarette for people of good taste." Lux soap offers Hollywood glamour to those who wash

their skins with it: Jane Powell, Michelle Morgan and Deborah Kerr appear among the "nine out of the ten" stars who use Lux. Reflecting the American concern for cleanliness, articles for personal hygiene abound: Kolynos, Sunbeam electric shavers, Profiden, Listerine, Nivea, Williams, Floid, Palmolive, Colgate, Sloan, Lucky Strike eau de toilette and Remington electric shavers. Zsa Zsa Gabor fosters the obsession for conformity in body shape and beauty ideal by advertising AYDS diet system. Like their American counterparts, Spanish women "were [being] educated to look at themselves as things to be created competitively against other women: Painted and sculpted with the aids of the modern market" (Ewen, 1976: 180).

These values and all the promises of the American consumer society were being introduced by the Spanish Reader's Digest in the decade of the 1950s—from the eternity of diamonds to the pleasures of a trip on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway system.

Of the 378 articles that compose the 22-issue sample of this study, the direct promotion of the American Capitalist system appears in 15 of them; 3.96 percent of the sample. In all but one—"How the New German Generation Thinks"—the advocacy of some aspect of the system is the main theme. Thus, in every article that deals with economics, Capitalism is the theme.

After Communism, economy is the most serious topic treated by the Digest. This study did not attempt a rigorous theme classification of

all 378 articles of the sample by subjects; it selected only the most serious themes: those dealing with Communism and economy. However, as a related reference, Baylon (1980) did classify the 10,937 articles published in the magazine's U.S. edition from 1945 to 1970. After "Philosophy of Life" (8.64 percent) and medicine, the economy is the third most frequent theme—4.22 percent of the total number of articles dealt with it. It is the most prominent among serious themes, being the focus of more articles than justice (3.54 percent) or national politics (3.14). Although his qualitative content analysis is much less detailed than the one done here, Baylon notes the repetition of constant topics, such as the defense of private initiative against government intervention, and the need of the United States to expand the Capitalist system around the world (Baylon, 1980: 72-74).

Smith and Decker-Amos did not include the economy among the categories of his analysis, so no direct comparisons can be made. However, they did include a category referring to criticism of federal government, but in a much broader range than just regarding economic issues (Smith and Decker-Amos, 1985 : 128-29).

As in the analysis of anti-Communism messages, these 15 economic articles include more than one of the value variables. Again, only the most conspicuous themes in each article are considered.

The most repeated variable, which broadly comprise the rest, is the optimism regarding a system that has proved its efficiency in and

outside the United States. It appears as a main theme in nine—60 percent—of the articles dealing with economic issues.

As pragmatically illustrated in "Capitalists Who Prosper in Russia" (June, 1954) the basic assumption underlying this optimism is that Capitalism is the natural economic system. Despite rigorous control by the Soviet government, the market forces—the laws of supply and demand—are the ones ultimately regulating Russian economy through black market enterprise: "In Moscow you can find those who provide you with whatever you need... as long as you can pay the price you are asked."

The United States is presented as the only country where a true "democratic Capitalism" is practiced—the principal explanation for the country's prosperity. The achievements and qualities of the system are systematically defended from critiques and negative forecasts: "Is the U.S. Facing an Economic Crisis?" (July, 1954), "New Concept of Capitalism" (September 1956). Some justify the need to export the system in order to reach a global economic bonanza: "1960-1970 Era of Abundance in the Free World" (August, 1958) and "A new Economic Policy is Needed" (October, 1956). The latter suggests: "There is only one policy that the United States can adopt [...] to take the initiative to promote a quick economic development, especially in the industrial order, in the countries producers of raw materials." The Digest provides examples of the success of U.S.-promoted economic policies in the world: "How the New German Generation Thinks" (November,

1952), "Germany, the Most Prosperous Country in the World" (August, 1958), "Mexico on the Move" (November, 1953) and "Liberia Transforms Itself" (April, 1961).

The main theme of these articles defends official U.S. economic policies after World War II: To promote universal acceptance of a Capitalist free-market system and thus provide the expanding U.S. economy with new capital and consumer-goods markets (Ewen, 1976: 191; Vázquez Montalbán, 1974: 48-49). Government initiatives such as the Marshall Plan—in Germany, France— and later private ones, especially those of the multinational corporations—like those in Liberia—were the main instruments of this policy, praised from the Digest's pages.

The second most recurrent theme is the dilemma of Government intervention vs. private initiative, in which the Digest shows overwhelming support for the latter. This appears as a main theme in six, 40 percent of the pro-Capitalist articles. This strong defense in the Digest of the private businessmen against the big government draws from two different sources. On the one hand is Wallace's profound conviction of the negative impact that government policies have in public affairs in general and in the economy in particular, so graphically described by Christenson (1965) . On the other is the American individualism rooted in a cultural myth that places responsibility for all that happens in one's life upon the individual alone; a myth conveniently perpetuated by its media (Gans, 1979: 50-51).

Thus, social responsibility is less important than individual accomplishment, which in Wallace's exaltation of American wholesomeness becomes "individual selfishness" (Schiller, 1976: 107). In the Digest's pages "the social is reduced to the individual, and the individual to individualism. It is a tactic that is depressingly, tiringly repeated over and over again [...]" (Dorfman, 1983:145-47).

With these premises, it is no surprise to find that the Reader's Digest follows the trend, defined by Herbert Gans, of celebrating leading businessmen and commercial innovators as the heroes of a prosperous economy. Of the 15 pro-Capitalism articles, five—30 percent—feature these individuals as main characters in stories of entrepreneurial success. From Detroit ("The Man Who Thought With His Hands," "The Magic of Soy") and Monterrey ("Mexico on the Move") to Munich ("How the New German Generation Thinks") and Moscow ("Capitalists Who Prosper in Russia") the economic vitality of a nation is reduced to individual initiative, which Wallace's interprets as proof of the status of the group.

The U.S.I.A. report suggested differentiating American democratic Capitalism from the "feudalistic" State-directed European system. The Digest does so in three of the 15 economic articles, 20 percent of this sample. Rather than offering detailed analysis, the magazine concentrates on framing the discourse in terms of "freedom" against "interventionism." Negative labeling carries most of the critical function. "Collectivism," "protectionism," "tax collection," "cartels,"

"official monopolies," "subsidies," "inflation," devaluation," "reactionary," "restrictions," "socialization," are some of the concepts the Digest associates with the European Social Democratic economic systems, while the comparison is ever made between the non-material benefits enjoyed by American and Western European workers.

To counteract the impression—based in a Marxist interpretation, according to U.S.I.A. (Bogart, 1976: 90), that Capitalism is a unfair system, the Digest includes in six of the articles, 40 percent of the economic sample, tales that portray U.S. Capitalism as a fair system. The main argument is the trickle-down approach, in which the worker, as a producer and a consumer, always benefits from the general economic growth: "Employees are part of the company, not its enemies [...] Under this system, Capitalism is everyday less of a privilege, and the number of those who share its benefits is growing" ("New Concept of Capitalism," September, 1956).

"Sharing Progress for Peace in the Industry" (November, 1952) and "A Salary Plan Against Inflation" (August, 1958) address promoting negotiation for salaries on individual basis between employers and employees of each company. The article points out that this will avoid the dangers of abuses by workers organized in unions. Individual agreements are said to diminish the need for unions. Although the Digest proposed these arrangements, in Spain the labor was organized in "vertical unions" which "in an attempt to suppress the class struggle,

integrated proprietors, technicians and workers" (Tamames, 1973: 474). Thus, this article, although it is pro-Capitalist, is culturally irrelevant.

The Pact of Madrid represented for the Spanish government a political compromise to gradually open the protectionist and national self-sufficient economic policies that characterized the isolated post-World War II Spain. Five years after the Marshall Plan initiated U.S. penetration in Western Europe, Spain joined its neighbors in the adoption of economic policies that would consolidate of the United States as a super power. The Reader's Digest, loyal to promotion the essence of the American system, and closely echoing recommendations of the U.S.I.A. played the part of a propaganda machine for an individualistic free market-system.

CONCLUSIONS

From an original idea in the mind of Dewitt Wallace, the Reader's Digest rapidly became the most successful magazine in history. The reasons for this are complex. Some rest to a great extent on Wallace's understanding of human nature and his ability to figure out what people wanted to be told. Those who have studied the magazine unanimously agree that Wallace's preacher character—legacy of American secular Calvinism—was one the main ingredients in his "magic formula." He used the magazine as a pulpit from which he spread his ideas, which were extremely conservative regarding politics. Additionally, it always reflected the popular mythology of American national character: wholesomeness, optimism, individualism and all the values characteristic of the Protestant ethic. It soon became the most widely read magazine in the United States.

The status of super power acquired by the United States at the end of World War II helped the magazine in its expansion abroad. The relationship between the Digest and U.S. foreign policy became a symbiotic one: In the post-war political landscape left by World War II, in which the United States assumed the role of leader of the "free world" as opposed to the Communist countries, U.S. foreign policy needed ideological support for its military and economic expansion, especially in Western Europe. The Truman doctrine, with anti-

Communism at its core, and the Marshall Plan as strategy to promote the American Capitalist economic system abroad were the foundations on which emerging U.S. world hegemony was based. These were the arguments to be exploited by the U.S. official propaganda apparatus and by the American media as carriers of "soft propaganda." Any media reflects the values of the society within which it operates, and that was clearly the case of the Reader's Digest.

In these years, media accompanied the height of the U.S. military and political supremacy in the continent. American media brought to the citizens of nations devastated by the war welcome images of the good life, of peace and affluence. They carried messages of stability and easy definitions of good and evil: "At this time for audiences in most of the world there was a magic quality, if not in the United States as a society, certainly in the standard and style of living portrayed in American media." (Tunstall, 1977: 143).

Spain was at first excluded from the U.S. expansionist scheme due to the dictatorial character of Franco's regime, too close to Nazism. But, after five years, the strategic importance of Franco's anti-Communist stance and his predisposition toward opening the Spanish market and economic system to U.S. capital gained for him the status of ally of the "free world."

One year before, the Reader's Digest had anticipated this alliance and entered in Spain. The strict Spanish censorship prevented the Digest from publishing articles contrary to policies of the Franco regime

or the teachings of the Catholic church. The magazine became a symbol of modernity and prestige for an isolated, confined nation, Its success was immediate. One important contribution toward that success was the censorship that controlled or eliminated the competition, leaving the Digest as the only window to the events of the Cold War in a nation deprived of information outlets. Rather than an example of the triumph of ideas in a competition of "free flow" information, in this case the market had been constructed to assure its success.

Although mostly determined by the same imperatives that rule the production of other goods and services, cultural-information materials have a greater significance and influence on their consumers. In a more or less subtle way, they always convey the ideology of their producers, and are thus those that reinforce the status quo, extremely effective in gaining popular support for the values and the institutional system they represent. Sociologist Peter Berger, in his book *The Homeless Mind* defines mass media as a vehicle which carries a carefully constructed consciousness to those individuals, group and nations which it addresses. Thus, in the post-World War II scene, the importance of exported U.S. media cannot be seen simply in the context of media markets. The key of its relevance takes root in its role in the struggle for hegemony, which assures a certain predominance in both practice and consciousness that supports without violence the imposition of one system over others. American insistence at this time on linking the free economic market to the "free flow of information"

proves the importance given by U.S. officials to the diffusion abroad of the messages carried by its media. Indeed, in the 1940s, Congress supported U.S. media corporate attempts to establish "free flow" as international policy.

As the analysis made in chapters four and five shows, the messages carried by the Reader's Digest followed very closely the U.S.I.A. model for its propaganda operations abroad regarding the fight against Communism and projecting a positive image of the United States abroad. David Ogilvy, founder of the Ogilvy and Mather advertising agency once commented that "The magazine exports the best in American life... In my opinion, the Digest is doing as much as the U.S.I.A. to win the battle for men's minds" (Schiller, 1976: 2).

In the case of its anti-Communist values in Spain, it can be affirmed that the Digest content became a more direct, injected propaganda than one with a soft, socializing function. Anti-Communism has been described in this work as one of the underlying values and filters that shape U.S. Capitalist media content but, in the pages of the Spanish Digest and in this period of time, its content appears deliberately weighted with this value.

As promoted by the U.S. government and American Cold War media, the discourse was systematically framed in terms of the struggle between the Communism and the "free world," this is, East vs. West. This media tendency continued until the collapse of the Soviet Union. Accordingly, the most recurrent themes found in the Digest articles are

the aggressiveness and imperialistic ambitions of Chinese and, especially, Soviet Communism. These nations were described as posing an imminent danger—as systems depending upon violent oppression, brutality and abuses of human rights, rather than on popular support. American military build-up and espionage operations were defined as necessary defensive actions to preserve world peace. The third most repeated topic was the threat that Communism represented to cherished institutions and values.

Liberation and independence movements in third world countries were also framed within the terms of the East vs. West struggle. Because they often opposed authoritarian governments which the United States supported or imposed, the aspirations of these movements for social justice and economic independence were never recognized in U.S. mainstream media. Instead, they were described as mere instruments of Moscow's expansionism. Variations of a domino theory were usually used to justify military action to end opposition. On the other hand, the client-state status of many of these nations was never admitted, and the abuses committed by their rightist dictatorial regimes were simply ignored.

The Digest never acknowledged any positive achievement in Communist societies. The description of their flaws and malfunctions, centered on the prominent display of their material economic shortages, This treatment however provided the contradictory themes of Cold War media discourse in which the Soviet Union, was both

described as a dangerously powerful country, and as one constantly at the edge of economic collapse, indicated by the poverty of its citizens. Attacks to basic Communist concepts and ideology were ignored by the Digest in favor of focusing on the menace that the system represented.

The Reader's Digest promotion of the pro-Capitalist value, although also close to the model of the U.S.I.A., was more in the form of socialization messages than hard propaganda. The concept of a responsible Capitalist system permeates any piece of information referring to economic issues.

The most overarching theme was optimism about the U.S. system. The successes of the Marshall Plan and the opening of third world markets to U.S. capital were argued as logical steps toward expanding the system to the rest of the world in search of global prosperity. Thus, consciousness and practice were firmly promoted.

A particular preoccupation in Wallace's philosophy, the role of government intervention in economic affairs was systematically diminished as burdensome bureaucracy and backwardness. This element, together with Wallace's exaltation of the American individualistic character served to promote the role of private businessmen and innovators as models and basis for the success of the system and the consequent prosperity of a nation. Finally, the Digest featured consumerism as a sign of individual economic prosperity thus providing personal goals and the self-centered perspective that personal gain and market is a universal benefactor. As recommended by the

U.S.I.A, showing the American worker's purchasing power as a means to promoting Capitalism was as useful as just displaying the advertisements in U.S. international magazines. The Spanish Digest fulfilled both goals by showing the Spanish audience the promising future of a free market economy represented by consumer goods in its ads. These were more of a promise than a reality, as the average 1950s reader was far from being able to afford many of the items displayed in its colorful advertising pages. However, by stimulating these ambitions, creating these desires of material wealth and individual status, U.S. media helped assure supporters of a pro-U.S. capitalist system.

Spain provides a thought provoking example of U.S. hegemony, although it was but one element in the extension of U.S. predominance. What contributes to the importance of studying this case is the recognition that in matters that extend U.S. influence and power, these elements are disinterested in the form of government system within which they work. The United States through the Reader's Digest was as willing to work with a dictatorship as with a democracy, as long as the compatibility contributed to the attainment of U.S. goals in global policy. In its march toward becoming an anti-Communist super power, the very democratic principles—deeply rooted in the American political system—that underlie material in the Reader's Digest content, were abandoned in alliances with oppressive governments.

The case of Spain provides not only an example of that willingness, but also of the U.S.I.A. disinterest in political matters

beyond the issue of U.S. influence. In this context, discussions about principle or morality of the pro-Capitalist, anti-Communist system is not an issue. This pragmatism came to play a mayor aspect of U.S. alliances with brutal regimes around the globe—especially in Latin America—in contemporary history.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Acosta, Leonardo (1979), Mass Media and Imperialist Ideology. In Armand Mattelart and Seth Siegalub's *Communication and Clss Struggle. Volume I. Capitalism, Imperialism.* New York: International General.

Acosta Sánchez, José (1976), Crisis del franquismo y crisis del imperialismo. Barcelona: Editorial Anagrama.

Altschull, J. Herbert (1984), Agents of Power. New York and London: Longman.

Aronson, James (1973), The Press and the Cold War. Boston: Beacon Press

Bagdikian, Ben H. (1987), The Media Monopoly. Boston: Beacon Press

Bainbridge, John (1945), Little Wonder or, The Reader's Digest and how it grew. New York: Reynal and Hitchcock.

Baylon, Daniel (1988), L'Amérique Mythifiée. Le Reader's Digest de 1945 a 1970. Tolouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail.

Benavides, José Luis (1989), Madero and the Press: Four Mexico City Newspapers During 1911-1913. Master's thesis. Austin: University of Texas.

Berger, P., Berger, B. and Kellner, H. (1973), The Homeless MInd. Modernization and Consciousness. New York: Vintage books.

Black, George (1988), The Good Neighbor. New York: Pantheon.

Bogart, Leo (1976), Premises for Propaganda. The United States Information Agency's Operating Assumptions in the Cold War. New York: The Free Press. McMillanPublishing Co., Inc.

Carr, Raymond (1980), Modern Spain, 1875-1980. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Compaine, Benjamin M. (1982), Who Owns the Media? 2nd. Edition. White Plains, New York, and London:Knowledge Industry Publications Inc.

Cortada, James W. (1971), United States-Spanish Relations, Wolfram and World War II. New York: Praeger.

Cruz, Juanjo; Pou, Josep María; Puig, Joaquín, and Subirós, Pep (1977), Franquismo y lucha de clases. Barcelona: Iniciativas Editoriales S.A.

Curran, James and Seaton, Jean (1985), Power Without Responsibility. London: Methuen.

Chamorro, Eduardo and Fontes, Ignacio (1976), Las bases norteamericanas en España. Barcelona: Editorial Euros.

Chaukin, Samuel; Sangster, Jack, and Susman William (1976), Spain: Implications for United States Foreign Policy. Stanford, Conneticut: Greyllock Publishers.

Christenson, Reo M. (1965), Report on the Reader's Digest. *Columbia Journalism Review*, pp. 30-36.

Deibel, Terry L. and Robert, Walter R. (1976), Culture and Information: Two Foreign Policy Functions. Edited by the Center for Strategic and International Studies; Georgetown University, Washington D.C. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications

van Djik, Ten A. (1991), The interdisciplinary study of News Discourse. In Jensen, K.B. and Jankowsky, N.W. *A Handbook of Qualitative Methodologies for Mass Communication Research.* London and New York: Routledge.

Dorfman, Ariel (1980), Reader's Nuestro que estás en los cielos. México D.F.: Editorial Nueva Imagen.

_____. (1983), The Empire's Old Clothes. New York: Pantheon Books.

Ewen, Stuart (1976), Captains of Consciousness. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Fernández Areal, Manuel(1973), El control de la prensa en España. Madrid: Guadiana de Publicaciones S.A.

Fishman, Mark (1980), Manufacturing the News. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Gans, Herbert J. (1979), Deciding what's News. A study of CBS Evening News, NBC NIghtly News, Newsweek and Time. New York: Vintage Books.

Garberson, John W. (1972), A Limited Number of Advertising Pages. *Journalism Monographs*, November.

Garnham, Nicholas (1986), Contribution to a Political Economy of Mass Communication. In Collins, P. et al., *Mass Culture and Society.* London: Sage Publications.

Goodman, Walter (1982), Hard to Digest. *Harper's Magazine*, June, pp. 64-68.

Gramsci, Antonio (1971), Selections from the Prison Notebooks. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Herman, Edward S. (1982), The Real Terror Network. Boston: South End Press.

Herman, Edward S. and Chomsky, Noam (1988), Manufacturing Consent. New York: Pantheon Books.

Herman, Edward S. (1992), Beyond Hypocrisy. Decoding the New in an age of Propaganda. Boston: South End Press.

Joel, Judith and Erickson, Gerald M. (1987), Anti-Communism: The Politics of Manipulation. Minneapolis: MEP Publications.

Kerlinger, F. (1986), Foundations of Behavioral Research. 3rd. Ed. New York: Holt, Riheart and Winston.

Krippendorf, K. (1980), Content Analysis: An introduction to its Methodology. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage publications

Mattelart, Armand and Siegelaub, Seth (1979), Communication and Class Struggle. Volume 1. Capitalism, Imperialism. New York: International General.

Mattelart, Armand (1983), Transnationals and the Third World. South Hadley, Massachusetts: Bergin and Garvey Publishers, Inc.

McQuail, Denis (1989), Mass Communication Theory. And Introduction. 2nd. Edition. London: Sage Publications.

The New York Times, (1981a) April 1, 1981

The New York Times, (1981b) April 5, 1981

Parenti, Michael (1986), Inventing Reality. The Politics of the Mass Media. New York: St. Martin Press.

Payne, Stanley G. (1967), Franco's Spain. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company.

The Reader's Digest Association, Inc., (1992). 1992 Annual Report. Pleasantville, New York.

Rosemberg, Emily S. (1982), Spreading the American Dream. New York: Hill and Wang.

Rowse, Arthur E. and Stillman, Don (1968), Two Digest Cases. *Columbia Journalism Review*, Winter, pp. 24-27.

Rubottom, R. Richard and Murphy, J. Carter (1984), Spain and the United States Since World War II. New York: Praeger.

Schiller, Herbert I. (1969), Mass Communication and American Empire. New York: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers.

_____. (1976), Communication and Cultural Domination. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc.

_____. (1982), Manipuladores de cerebros. Buenos Aires: Gedisa.

Schreiner, Samuel A. (1977), The Condensed World of the Reader's Digest. New York: Stein and Day Publishers.

Sigal, Leon V. (1978), Reporteros y Funcionarios. Mexico: Ediciones Gernika.

Smith, Ron F. and Decker-Amos, Linda (1985), Of Lasting Interest? A Study of Change in the Content of the Reader's Digest. *Journalism Quarterly*, Winter, pp. 127-31.

Stebbins, Richard P. (1955), The United States in World Affairs, 1953. Published for the Council on Foreign Relations. New York: Harpers & Brothers.

Tamames, Ramón (1973), La República. La era de Franco. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.

Tunstall, Jeremy (1977), The Media are American. New York: Columbia University Press.

Tusell, Javier (1988), La dictadura de Franco. Madrid: Aliznza Editorial.

_____. (1989), La España de Franco. Madrid: Historia 16.

Vázquez Montalbán, Manuel (1974), La penetración americana en España. Madrid: Cuadernos para el diaálogo.

Vilar, Pierre (1977), Spain, a Brief History. New York, Pergamon Press.

Whitaker, Arthur P. (1961), Spain and the Defense of the West. New York: Harper & Brothers.

Wood, James Playsted (1967), Of Lasting Interest. The Story of the Reader's Digest. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc.

The vita has been removed from the digitized version of this document.